

Hafa Adai!

Problems encountered in securing tower crane at IPI site. **PAGE 2**

Sablan says it's not confirmed that Villagomez will be her running-mate. **PAGE 6**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

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43 more bring total to 855

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. reported yesterday morning that 43 individuals were identified and confirmed positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI's total to 855. The new cases were found through surveillance testing on Nov. 29 and have since been quarantined and actively monitored.

CHCC also reported that there are 397 active cases of COVID-19 right now and six active hospitalizations. Of the

six, five are unvaccinated, one is vaccinated, and no one is on a ventilator.

Of the 43 new cases, 26 were found through community-based testing and 17 through contact tracing. By vaccination status, of the 43, 11 were fully vaccinated, nine

See 855 on Page 4

WITH 7 HOSPITALIZED FOR COVID-19 'This is preventable'

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A total of seven persons in the CNMI are right now in the

hospital with COVID-19, with only one of them being vaccinated and all six others being unvaccinated.

This was learned during

a virtual news briefing yesterday with Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief ex-

See PREVENTABLE on Page 4

Star Marianas suspends all flights due to COVID-19

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Following the recent announcement that COVID-19 has spread to the island of Tinian, Star Marianas Air Inc.

suspended all its interisland flights starting yesterday.

According to the Star Marianas' website, due to the risks presented by an unhealthy flight environment,

See FLIGHTS on Page 4



Stranded passengers crowd the commuter terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport after being caught flat-footed by Star Marianas' decision to suspend commercial operations starting yesterday due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the CNMI.

YOGI SINGH

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:49pm, Dec. 1, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population **86.9%**
Fully Vaccinated: **86.9%**

Days since last community transmission **1**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	34,339
Fully Vaccinated:	31,055
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,973
Fully Vaccinated:	4,777
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,006

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,199	15	19,214
Recovered	17,301	87	17,388
Active	1,545	15	1,560
Deaths	263	3	266

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	812	43	855
Traced via Travel Screening	267	0	267
Traced via Community Screening	545	43	588
Deaths	3	0	3

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

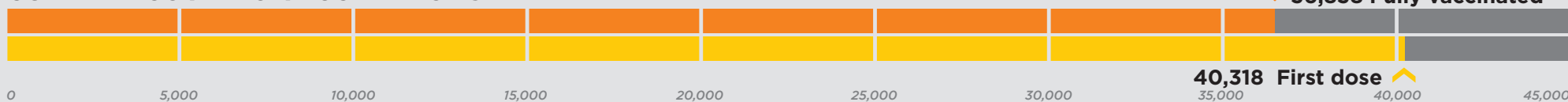
LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

23 DAYS
BEFORE CHRISTMAS

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: [vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/](https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/)

INSIDE

BUSINESS

A panel of U.S. health advisers are backing a closely watched COVID-19 pill from Merck.

PAGE 11



NATION

A 15-year-old sophomore opened fire at his Michigan high school, killing three students.

PAGE 11



ASIA

South Korea's daily jump in coronavirus infections exceeded 5,000 for the first time since 2020.

PAGE 12



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GOT A NEWS TIP?

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Local

Problems encountered in securing tower crane at IPI site

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Securing Tower Crane No. 6 at the Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's Im-

» Crane removal operation suspended anew since Monday due to bad weather

perial Pacific Resort project site in Garapan has been met with many problems, including high-speed winds, according to IPI chief engineer Eric Poon.

Poon said yesterday they are still working on removing Tower Crane No. 6; when

that's done, removal operation will follow for Tower Crane No. 5 and 1.

Because of this week's bad weather, work on Crane No. 6 has been suspended again since last Monday, Poon said.

He said total removal operation will be done only on

Crane No. 5.

For Tower Crane No. 6, IPI, through a contractor, is removing only the arms, and the jib-boom that is holding the counterweight. Tower Crane 1 will be re-inspected for removal operation.

Right now, there are three tower cranes at the site: No. 1, No. 5, and No. 6. Tower Crane No. 6 is the one facing the beach, while Tower Crane No. 5 is facing Joeten. Tower Crane No. 1 is inside the construction site.

Poon said their initial projection to finish everything for the removal of Crane No. 6 was last Nov. 19.

Last July 29, the Commonwealth Casino Commission expressed concern about the danger the three standing tower cranes at the construction site poses to business establishments and people, with no ongoing construction and especially during this typhoon season.

Last August, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona issued an order authorizing IPI to do whatever is necessary to secure the cranes.

At the CCC board's monthly meeting last week, Poon said they have documented all the issues pertaining to the removal of Tower Crane Number 6 and submitted their weekly report to CCC.

Poon said they also spoke with the Department of Public Works about the status of the crane removal operation.

He said bad weather brought high speed winds, causing the suspension of the removal operation for Crane No. 6.

"So in the past two weeks, we probably stopped the operation four times already," said

See **PROBLEMS** on Next Page



Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's chief engineer Eric Poon discusses ongoing operation to secure three standing tower cranes at IPI's Imperial Pacific Resort project site in Garapan during the Commonwealth Casino Commission's monthly board meeting at the Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai last week.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

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DeLeon Guerrero introduces bill that waives repayment of scholarships

Senator Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) introduced yesterday a bill that seeks to waive the repayment of the scholarship of those who have completed their degree program as well as those who were unable to complete their degree program.

DeLeon Guerrero's Senate Bill 22-70 proposes to waive the repayment requirements of the CNMI Scholarship memorandum of agreement/promissory note.

The senator stated in the bill that the CNMI Scholarship policy, through a MOA/

promissory note, requires the scholarship recipient to work for a Commonwealth employer within 90 days after the ter-

mination or completion of the degree plan.

She said if the requirement is not fulfilled, then the recipi-

ent is required to pay the entire amount of the scholarship or loan received.

DeLeon Guerrero said the

CNMI Scholarship recipients need assistance to alleviate their dilemma of finding jobs when they return and those

who are unable to complete their education plan yet they must pay the scholarship they received. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

PROBLEMS

From Page 2

Poon, adding that this is something that they did not anticipate in the operation that is now going into its fifth week.

With respect to Crane No. 5, he said they are going to finalize the draft plan for its total removal. Poon said the final plan will then be sent to DPW.

In his response to CCC executive director Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero's questions, Poon said they have enough manpower for the removal operation and likewise have the proper equipment.

He said they had just purchased a special tool to remove or push the 16 pins of Crane No. 6.

Poon said what they usually do is just use a hammer, but for some reasons the pins will not come out so they had to find an alternative, which meant they had to buy a special tool.

He said they would probably be done already with Crane No. 6 if they did not encounter problems with removing the pins and bad weather.

"We are very confident that we can take out the pins. We're very confident we can take down 6 and 5," he said, adding that their workers are skilled.

"We cannot skip any steps. We have to follow every single step in order to take it down safely," Poon said.

For the safety of the public, he said they do have a "signal man" every day on the ground so every time someone passes or any car would drive by, they'd be notified or stopped temporarily.

He said assigning a "signal man" is their safety procedures, along with their security guards.

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• KBB: \$25,535

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SPORT



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US territories to be removed from CDC's COVID-19 travel designations

The U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will remove the CNMI, Guam, and other U.S. territories from its COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination on Dec. 6, 2021.

This policy change will formally list the CNMI as a domestic destination for the United States. For most of the pandemic, the CNMI was classified by the CDC as "Level 1: COVID-19 Low," meaning that it is listed as a safe destination with low community transmission.

"The White House informed me

earlier today that the CNMI will be removed from CDC's COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination, paving the way for the safe return to normal tourism for our islands," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres in a news release last night. "The Marianas is open for business as a tourism destination, and we have a proven track record during this entire COVID-19 response through our travel quarantine protocols, testing requirements, and successful vaccination efforts of our people. This policy change by

the CDC speaks to the strong measures we have in place. CNMI has been a model for the Pacific and the nation in mitigating against COVID-19, and we will continue to keep our hospitalization rate low and safeguard our *man'amko*, our chronically ill, and our loved ones through strong protective measures and by practicing the 3Ws."

In Guam, Lt. Gov. Josh Tenorio, in his capacity as acting governor, also released a statement about the decision.

"Effective Dec. 6, Guam will be

removed from the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination, and we will be considered domestic travel. As a U.S. territory, we welcome this news, which aligns us with our stateside counterparts and better positions us for reopening to our tourism markets sooner. Not only is Guam 'Where America's Day

Begins,' but we have continually been a leader in this pandemic response, instituting mandatory travel quarantine, mask mandates, and proof of vaccination requirements earlier than others. We believe this change also recognizes the tremendous progress we have made in recent weeks, combating the third surge of COVID-19." (*Saipan Tribune*)

Men accused of burglarizing IPI warehouse accused of also burglarizing lawyer's home

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

Two men who were arrested last month for allegedly burglarizing an Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC warehouse in Chalan Piao are now being accused of burglarizing the home of a local lawyer.

Donivin Chargualaf and Matthew Duenas, two of three men accused of being behind the burglary at an IPI warehouse in Chalan Piao last Nov. 10, are now accused of taking part in a four-man burglary at the home of David Banes and his wife, Antonina, on Mt. Tapochao back in October.

The two other man who are allegedly involved in this case are James Kintz, and Binh Nguyen, also known as "Alex." The four were each charged with theft and burglary

Following an arraignment hearing last Monday, Chargualaf, 24; Kintz, 34; Duenas, 30; and Nguyen, 24 pleaded not guilty to the charges against them.

Only Duenas was released to a third-party custodian and remains out of Department of Corrections custody.

A status conference hearing is scheduled before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio on Jan. 11, 2022, at 1:30pm.

According to the charging documents, sometime in October 2021, the four men entered the house of the Banes couple and stole from them furniture, appliances, electronics, bikes, tools, building material, and paintings—with a combined value of more than \$20,000.

The Banes told police that they were alerted to the burglary when Antonina Banes saw her belongings being sold on the Facebook page of Saipan Garage Sale.

Antonina Banes told police that she and her husband built their house in 2006 but moved out of the house in 2020, but left the furniture and placed the house for rent.

Stoppers pays up to \$1,000 for any information leading to an arrest," a DPS statement said.

Police reports state that DPS received a 911 call at around 1:25pm last Friday, Nov. 26, reporting a burglary and theft incident at the bar.

At the scene, a staff member of the establishment stated that unknown individuals had broken into the bar. Items missing included 10 or 11 bottles of tequila and whiskey.

Upon reviewing the surveillance video, police noticed two unknown individuals wearing light-colored hoodies, light-colored shorts, and a dark-colored bag-pack walking throughout the bar. (*Kimberly B. Esmores*)

Wanted: Men who burglarized VFW Sports Bar

The Department of Public Safety is on the hunt for two men who are believed to have burglarized the Veterans of Foreign Wars Sports Bar in Garapan last Friday.

DPS spokesperson Adrian Pangelina said the department is asking for the community's help to identify the two men who were caught on surveillance camera walking through the bar at the same time a robbery took place at the establishment.

"If you have any information on the incident that took place at the VFW sports bar in Garapan, please call 911. If you wish to remain anonymous please call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. Crime

PREVENTABLE

From Page 1

ecutive officer Esther L. Muña, who said it is "disheartening," "exhausting," and "overwhelming" to see more unvaccinated individuals being hospitalized and others visiting the hospital's emergency room reporting COVID-19 symptoms.

"Our current situation is disheartening and frustrating as we continue to see unvaccinated individuals admitted to our hospital [and Alternate Care Site] due to serious complications [related to] COVID-19. ...And again we continue to emphasize that this is preventable," she said.

All seven patients are receiving care at the hospital or at CHCC's Alternate Care Site.

CHCC reported its first COVID-19 related hospitalization on Nov. 19. Before that, nobody in the CNMI had been hospitalized for COVID-19. That number went up to two on Nov. 24, when CHCC reported 98 new cases in the CNMI, and then went up to three a day later, together with 45 new additional cases. Active hospitalizations went up to four on Nov. 29, then climb to

six on Nov. 30.

Muña reiterated that COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and readily available for those eligible to receive them.

She said the hospital's emergency rooms are slammed with individuals coming in with COVID-19 symptoms. This surge of COVID-19 cases hinders CHCC's ability to tend to other patients experiencing severe complications outside of COVID-19, she added.

"We are seeing our emergency rooms slammed with individuals coming in with symptoms and it is overwhelming for us. ...[And with] seven individuals now hospitalized, that is concerning for us as a health system. This hinders our ability to care for other patients experiencing severe illnesses ...regardless of their vaccination status," she said.

Another point of concern for CHCC, Muña said, is the health and safety of the CNMI's vulnerable populations, which include the elderly, individuals with preexisting medical conditions, frontline health care workers, and other front-liners.

In the CNMI's fight against COVID-19, Muña said, "We all have a responsibility." For her and CHCC,

part of this responsibility is informing the community that COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and readily available for those eligible to receive them. If applicable, Muña also advises receiving a booster shot.

"We all have responsibility ... [and] we want people to understand that, first of all, the vaccine is safe and effective, and, if you are eligible, please [get your booster shots] as soon as we get more supplies," she said.

Muña said that CHCC is temporarily running short on its supply of COVID-19 vaccines, but assured that more are coming by the end of this week. Muña added CHCC is working closely with the federal government to expedite vaccine deliveries moving forward, and said that, in a way, "it's actually very encouraging to see that more people are getting vaccinated."

As of yesterday, according to the vaccinatecnmi.com dashboard, over 40,000 individuals have at least gotten their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, almost 37,000 are fully vaccinated, and almost 8,000 have received an additional dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. The CNMI's vaccination rate is currently at 86.9%.

855

From Page 1

were unvaccinated, one was ineligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and the remaining were pending verification as of 3am yesterday.

Since Oct. 28, there have been 564 new cases. Of the 564, 266 were found through contact tracing, 286 through community-based testing, and 12 through travel testing.

As for its vaccination updates, CHCC reported that 560 COVID-19 shots were administered on Nov. 29, bringing the CNMI's vaccination rate to 86.4%. Getting vaccinated, and the CNMI's high vaccination rate "affords the community more protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death," said CHCC.

Tinian cases

In an interview yesterday with KUAM's Thomas Mangloña II, Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan said that he met with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Governor's COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren F. Villagomez yesterday to discuss Tinian's further plans because of four community cases of COVID-19 having already been found on Tinian.

Aldan said that task force person-

nel on Tinian have been conducting contact tracing and COVID-19 testing on the island since the afternoon of Nov. 30 and that discussions have been ongoing with him and the CNMI's health leaders regarding sending Tinian's cases to Saipan for isolation and care.

Giving his take on sending Tinian's cases to Saipan, Aldan told Mangloña that Tinian residents have expressed to him that they would have more peace of mind if allowed to isolate at home. "A lot of our people are telling me, 'Mayor, I'd rather stay at my house than...be put in a room for seven to 10 days [and not] see anyone in my family,'" he said.

Aldan said this will be a concern he will raise during his meeting with the CNMI's health leaders, but acknowledged that this would deviate from the CNMI's COVID-19 protocols and that if any more issues arise on Tinian due to deviating from the protocols, the responsibility goes back to him.

"These things are outside the protocol. Now if we deviate from the protocol...I'm afraid that it's going to be [all] on me...and that's a big responsibility," said Aldan.

Aldan's interview with KUAM can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4RxlDCs4Y>.

FLIGHTS

From Page 1

Star Marianas Air is immediately suspending all commercial operations until further notice.

"Our Reservations is currently working with customers who have existing bookings for refunds and cancellations," the website stated.

Saipan Tribune learned that a handful of individuals who were expecting to hop on the next flight back to Tinian, Rota, or Saipan were stranded because of the immediate suspension of flights.

Star Marianas addressed the issue and has organized charter flights for today, Dec. 2, for those who need to return home.

"We understand with the sudden suspension of flights there are several residents of Rota and Saipan that need to return to their home islands. We are in the process of organizing charter flights for Thursday between Rota and Saipan to help return people to their home islands until a determination can be made as to if/when commercial service may resume," Star Marianas states.

For those who want to get on one of these charter flights, contact Star Marianas' reservation department at 670-433-9996/9997/9998 for more information.

Saipan Tribune reached out to Star Marianas president Shaun Christian yesterday but he had yet to respond as of press time.

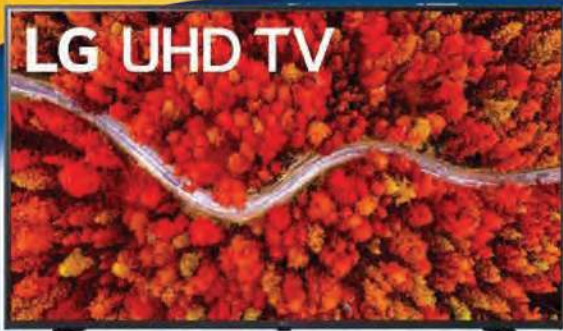
In a statement from Kimberlyn King-Hinds, Commonwealth Ports Authority chairwoman, it was only a matter of time before the virus reached Tinian. The best thing the community can do now is to accept and adapt to life with COVID-19, which includes practicing the 3 W's and getting vaccinated.

"People are regularly conducting business, doing work-related training, and travelling in and out of Tinian for various reasons. With the increase of infection rates on Saipan, it was a matter of when, not if, for someone to be infected with COVID-19. This shouldn't come as a surprise, especially when so many of us have let our guards down with practicing the 3W's. I'm guilty of that. We are a tight-knit community and when you hear this news, it's not some random stranger, it's our family member or our friend and so people are going to be scared and worried. It's a normal reaction. With that said, we have to adjust our thinking and start accepting the fact that COVID-19 is not going to go away and the government can only do so much. We have to do our part and that is making sure we are vaccinated and we practice the 3 W's," she said.



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Sablan says it's not confirmed that Villagomez will be her running-mate

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) said Tuesday it's not

» Lawmaker says she is still meeting with potential candidates

confirmed that House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-

Saipan) will be her running-mate as lieutenant governor

under the NMI Democratic Party for the November 2022 gubernatorial election.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry about talks

that Villagomez will be her running-mate, Sablan, who is the Democrats' candidate for governor, said she is still meeting with potential candidates.

"The process is ongoing," she said.

The lawmaker said the Party's Search Committee continues to assist and provide valuable feedback.

Villagomez himself told *Saipan Tribune* Tuesday that there has been no confirmation that he is Sablan's running-mate.

Villagomez has been representing Precinct 3 in the House



Sablan



Villagomez

OIA celebrates completion of Colonia Wellness Center in Yap

» Yap State plans opening ceremony for the public

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs applauds the completion of the Colonia Wellness Center in Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia.

The project was jointly funded by the U.S. government through the Compact of Free Association and the Government of Japan to support and benefit the people of Yap.

"We are excited to see the opportunities for health care management that can be provided in this newly constructed facility for the families of Yap and are pleased to partner with Yap and the FSM in this tangible way," said deputy assistant secretary Keone Nakoa.

The Colonia Wellness Center in Nimar, Weloy, Yap is a one-story structure with approximately 2,865 square feet of floor area that houses a reception area, a lounge, a gym, an aero-



The newly completed Colonia Wellness Center in Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

bics area, an administrative office, showers and locker rooms, training and conference rooms, storage, and other screening and evaluation areas.

Planned and designed to help develop and grow a stronger community, the center serves as a location where people may participate in physical activity classes such

as Zumba or yoga; learn about nutrition and other health topics; receive health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, and A1C; monitor personal health progress; and the like.

The building was constructed and furnished with Compact of Free Association infrastructure sector grants of \$373,000 as jointly approved

by the bilateral Joint Economic Management Committee. Additional grant funding of \$90,000 was provided by the government of Japan's Grassroots Grant Program. All grant funding provided under the Compact of Free Association is distributed and managed by the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs. (PR)



The aerobics area at the recently constructed Colonia Wellness Center.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



The gym room with exercise equipment.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NMI Supreme Court limits in-person transactions

In light of the rapidly rising number of COVID-19 cases in the community, the NMI Supreme Court directed yesterday its staff and the public to limit in-person courtroom contact as much as possible.

As outlined in its COVID-19 Order No. 16 yesterday, Judiciary staff and the public are being required to conduct transactions with the use of electronic filing, teleconferencing, and video conferencing.

Also, from Nov. 30, 2021, to Jan. 7, 2022, the NMI Superior Court will be limiting in-person proceedings by scheduling telephonic or video conferencing.

"Our judges and justices, staff, and members of the Bar [Association] are well-versed in conducting virtual hearings at this point in the pandemic. The Judiciary anticipates that Superior Court matters will continue to move forward, albeit in a different form than we are used

to," said Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro.

The following Judiciary facilities are open to the public for limited purposes: Guma Hustisia, Centron Hustisia, and the Commonwealth Recorder's satellite office at Marianas Business Plaza (by appointment only). The Kotten Tinian is temporarily closed until Monday, Dec. 6, 2021.

Persons with apparent symptoms of COVID-19 such as a fever of over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius, severe cough, or shortness of breath may be prohibited from entering the facilities. The order further requires that all persons, while in NMI Judiciary facilities or properties, to wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth, stay six feet apart from others who are not in the same household, and to wash their hands often. (PR)

JKPL shows off enhanced Bookmobile



Guests and staff of the Joeten Kiyu Public Library pose in front of the newly retrofitted JKPL Bookmobile and Technology Mobile Express last Nov. 19, 2021.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's Bookmobile is on the move.

With the library set to celebrate its 30th anniversary this year, as part of the pre-anniversary festivities, Team JKPL hosted a picture-taking at the JKPL parking lot for the much anticipated and newly retrofitted JKPL Bookmobile and Technology Mobile Express last Nov. 19, 2021.

After months of retrofitting, the Technology Mobile Express, along with the newly acquired JKPL Bookmobile, have made their way home to Susupe, Saipan. Local dignitaries and JKPL staff attended the picture-taking last Nov. 19, 2021, with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres witnessing a very special early Christmas present just in time for the JKPL's 30th anniversary celebration.

Commonwealth Library

Council treasurer Charles V. Cepeda, Sen. Vinnie Sablan (R-Saipan), House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan), Rep. Lee "Pan" Tenorio (R-Saipan), and Rep. Roy Ada (R-Saipan) were also in attendance that day.

"Thank you, library director Erlinda C. Naputi, for your strong leadership and for the hard work and contribution each and everyone of you have done in ensuring that our community receives the best programs and services especially for our most underserved. Thank you, and happy holidays," said Torres.

A formal unveiling for the newly retrofitted Bookmobile and Technology Mobile Express will be revealed this December. Stay tuned, CNMI! (PR)

Muña continues to advocate for getting vaxxed and masking up

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the continued rise of positive cases of COVID-19 in the CNMI, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña continues to emphasize the importance of getting vaccinated and wearing a face covering.

During a virtual news brief-

ing Monday, Muña said that what she and CHCC are currently seeing is that it is the unvaccinated individuals who are experiencing severe symptoms of COVID-19 while vaccinated individuals, though testing positive, experience less severe symptoms. As such, Muña urges community members who have not received been vaccinated to consider doing so.

Right now, there are six individuals who are hospitalized in the CNMI for COVID-19, with five of them being unvaccinated. None of the individuals are on a ventilator, CHCC reported.

Last Monday, there were four active hospitalizations, all four being unvaccinated individuals, and two individuals under observation at CHCC's Alternative Care Site.

Muña said that, at this point in time, she and CHCC is seeing widespread transmission of COVID-19. However, Muña added that she and CHCC are also seeing how COVID-19 vaccines work and how being vaccinated prevents most from contracting severe COVID-19-related illnesses.

“[COVID-19 transmission is] already widespread;

we can already see that. It's not targeted against a population, it's not targeted against one congregation, we're seeing it all around. But we are also seeing [how] vaccination works...with preventing hospitalizations and severe illness,” she said.

Muña added that CHCC has also been looking at the recent turnout at vaccination sites and said that the numbers as of late were like what CHCC was seeing when it first rolled out COVID-19 vaccines. On top of getting vaccinated, Muña also urges community members to wear a face covering when meeting with others.

As part of a news release Tuesday, CHCC reported that 519 vaccines were administered on Nov. 29. According to the vaccinatecnmi.com dash-

board, as of Tuesday, 36,628 individuals, or 86.4% of the CNMI's eligible population, are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

“To see that ...individuals are coming in, hearing our call, [and getting] vaccinated, we appreciate that, but we also want to continue to ask people to mask up [because] the most vulnerable time when you can get infected is really with hanging out with your friends and your families,” said Muña.

The regular reports of double-digit cases of COVID-19 remain a concern, but Muña assures that CHCC's contact tracing team identifies, isolates, and tests persons of interest quickly and that adequate medical attention is available at these isolation sites for the individuals that need it.

Man who shot pistol in Garapan pleads not guilty

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man accused of firing a pistol in Garapan in the heat of an argument with another man pleaded not guilty to the charges against him before the Superior Court.

Norman Desebel Kapileo, 48, pleaded not guilty before Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja last Monday to the charges of assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

Naraja ordered Kapileo to return to court for a status conference on Jan. 5 before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho.

Kapileo, who appeared out of custody of the Department of Corrections, is the federal court's second Drug Offender Re-entry Program graduate.

According to court documents, Department of Public Safety officers responded last Nov. 4 at approximately 10:48pm to a report of possible gunshots in an abandoned

apartment in Garapan.

At the scene, police spoke with the alleged victim, Peter Aldan. He told police that Kapileo came to the abandoned building looking for another individual but when Aldan said he did not know where the other individual was, Kapileo got mad and pulled a gun out of his pocket and “pistol whipped” him.

Police noted that the person Kapileo was looking for had a fight with Kapileo's brother on Nov. 3.

The victim told police that when he realized that it was a gun that Kapileo was holding, he reached for it and held Kapileo's right arm and wrist in an attempt to take the gun away from him, prompting Kapileo to shoot a round.

The victim said he continued struggling with Kapileo as he tried to take the gun away from the suspect. The victim stated he even bit Kapileo's finger in an effort to take the gun away.

During the struggle, the victim said three or four more shots were fired, but he did not recall which direction it

Free Fall Protection Training set

The CNMI Department of Labor said Tuesday that the University of California San Diego Extension will be conducting a free Fall Protection Training at Aqua Resort Club on the following dates and times:

■ **Dec. 2, 2021:** 8am–12pm/12:30pm–4:30pm

■ **Dec. 3, 2021:** 8am–12pm/12:30pm–4:30pm

■ **Dec. 6, 2021:** 8am–12pm/12:30pm–4:30pm

The UCSD Extension is providing this free Fall Protec-

tion Training which is being funded by a Susan Harwood Grant. These free half-day courses will be taught in-person. Choose one of four-hour sessions and enroll on the website below.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/copy-of-fall-protection-workshop-courses-for-cnmi-saipan-tickets-216697607377>

For more information contact the CNMI OSHA at (670) 664-3154/3156/3157. **(PR)**

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NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.net>

PUBLIC NOTICE

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION (NMHC) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – DISASTER RECOVERY (CDBG-DR) FEDERAL CROSS-CUTTING REQUIREMENT PRESENTATION ON SECTION 3, DAVIS BACON AND RELATED ACTS (DBRA), ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS, FAIR LABOR, FAIR HOUSING & NON-DISCRIMINATION, AND WOMEN AND MINORITY OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES.

12/02/2021

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is conducting a Federal Cross-Cutting presentation for all interested contractors planning to conduct business with the NMHC. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) encourages all HUD funded programs to comply with these requirements.

Section 3 is a provision of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. The purpose of Section 3 is to ensure employment and other economic opportunities generated by certain HUD financial assistance shall, to the greatest extent feasible, and consistent with existing Federal, State and local laws and regulations, be directed to low-and very low-income persons, particularly those who are recipients of government assistance for housing, and to business concerns which provide economic opportunities to low-and very low-income person.

Davis Bacon and Related Acts: require the payment of prevailing wages to laborers and mechanics employed on the site of the work of certain federal or federally assisted contracts for construction, alteration, or repair.

An Environmental Review is the process of reviewing a project and its potential environmental impacts to determine whether it meets federal, state, and local environmental standards. The environmental review process is required for all HUD-assisted projects to ensure that the proposed project does not negatively impact the surrounding environment and that the property site itself will not have an adverse environmental or health effect on end users

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a federal law which establishes minimum wage, overtime pay eligibility, recordkeeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in federal, state, and local governments.

The Fair Housing Act (FHA) is a federal statute that prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, as well as in residential real-estate related transactions such as advertising, mortgage lending, homeowner's insurance and zoning.

As a recipient of HUD financial assistance, NMHC CDBG-DR is required as the non-Federal entity to take necessary steps to ensure that all Subrecipients, Contractors, subcontractors, and/or developers funded in whole or in part with CDBG-DR financial assistance ensure that, when possible, contracts and other economic opportunities are directed to small and minority firms, women-owned business enterprises (WBEs), and labor surplus area firms.

The Federal Cross-Cutting Requirement presentation is scheduled on December 15, 2021, 10:00 a.m. via Zoom Teleconferencing. You may access the Zoom Teleconference link at www.nmhc.gov.net Public Notice/Announcement tab or www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

If you may have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer at (670)234-6866/9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhc.gov.net.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

Tinian Field Office
Tel: (670)433-9213
Fax: (670)433-3690

“NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency”

Rota Field Office
Tel: (670)532-9410
Fax: (670)532-9441

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

EDWARD FRANK CABRERA
Petitioner,
vs.
HUANG XIAOMEI
Respondent.

FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION
NO. 21-0439
SUMMONS FOR
PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 8012 SYRB Saipan CNMI 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 20th day of October, 2021.

/s/
CLERK OF COURT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: DPW22-ITB No.: 42200015

SUBMISSION DATE: December 21, 2021 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

“Renovation of Government Building 1359, Capitol Hill, Saipan”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **November 18, 2021** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 07, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Project Site Government Building 1359, Saipan**. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 14, 2021** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ **ANTHONY A. CAMACHO**
Acting Secretary, DPW

/s/ **FRANCISCO C. AGUON**
Acting Director, Division of
Procurement Services

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A Georgia jury correctly draws the line on stand-your-ground rights

The multiple guilty verdicts last Wednesday against three white Georgia men who cornered and murdered a Black jogger marked a refreshing turn of justice. A jury drew a much-needed line between stand-your-ground laws and gun-carrying vigilantes who have been emboldened to go on human hunting sprees. The nearly all-white jury decided that spurious assertions of self-defense and false allegations of hostile intent by the victim, Ahmaud Arbery, were no excuse for the reckless actions of defendants Travis McMichael and his father, Gregory McMichael, and their neighbor, William Bryan.

That's how the system is supposed to work every time. Unfortunately, the results too often lead to disappointment for Americans who want to see punishment for vigilantes who go out with guns looking for trouble and wind up killing people without justification. Long before the Nov. 20 not-guilty verdict for teenage vigilante Kyle Rittenhouse in Wisconsin, there was George Zimmerman in 2012. He stalked Black teenager Trayvon Martin on a Florida street, confronted the unarmed boy without justification, then killed him. Zimmerman and Rittenhouse inserted themselves into dangerous confrontations without cause, then convinced jurors that self-defense was their only way to get out alive.

Race issues played a role in all three cases. But in Georgia, prosecutor Jackie Johnson smartly sidestepped potential racial motivations to focus on the way gun owners misinterpret stand-your-ground laws as a license to kill.

Arbery was an athlete and avid jogger. He was out for a run at midday on Feb. 23, 2020, when he paused to explore a construction site in a white residential neighborhood. Then he resumed his run. The McMichaels and Bryan decided to chase Arbery down with their vehicles and corral him. As Travis McMichael later testified, Arbery had made no hostile gestures and carried no weapon, nor had he taken anything from the construction site. The three assailants simply assumed he was up to no good, and Arbery paid for that assumption with his life.

At trial, Jackson avoided mentioning Arbery's race or the overtly racist statements the defendants had made after the murder. Jurors didn't hear about the Confederate flag that adorned Travis McMichael's license plate. It was a smart decision by Johnson because, regardless of whether racism played a role in the defendants' actions, they were not facing hate crime charges in the state case. So why introduce that distraction?

Johnson kept the case simple: Possession of a gun doesn't give people the right to force others into submission. Just because people have guns and claim to be standing their ground doesn't mean that they automatically qualify as the National Rifle Association's "good guy with a gun" stopping the bad guy.

Jurors in Georgia fortunately saw through this bogus Second Amendment argument and carefully weighed the facts on their own merits. They properly concluded, at long last, that stand-your-ground authority doesn't give gun owners a right to go on human hunting sprees.

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Filthy and dangerous: The risky job of a garbage collector

This week I had the honor of meeting our CNMI trash collection companies to share with them the Universal Garbage Collection initiative and to get their feedback on moving the UGC forward. I say honor because trash collection is a dirty and underappreciated job in our community. We all know by now that keeping our hands clean is one of the most effective ways to keep the coronavirus away. But what if it's your job to get your hands dirty?

When you talk about the dirtiest jobs around, there's no doubt that the image of a trash collector on the back of a garbage truck comes to mind. After all, it's their job to handle your garbage. More than dirty, a waste and recycling worker's job is dangerous.

Perhaps you may not think about trash and recycling workers often, yet every week they arrive at your house or business to empty your bins. That's only a fraction of what they do each day, rain or shine, and usually with no recognition. If you look up the 10 most dangerous jobs in America, you will find garbage collectors have been ranked as high as No. 3. According to Time magazine, refuse and recyclable material collectors are ranked fifth on the list of dangerous professions. As far dangerous jobs go, refuse collectors, such as those who pick up your trash, beat out farmworkers, steelworkers, and powerline installers.

Many factors contribute to the dangers of this labor-intensive position, including the elements. Picking up and dumping trash bins over and over for hours each day is physically taxing, but

TRASH TALK

By GARY SWORD

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Gary Sword is chairman of the Universal Garbage Collection Task Force and is vice president of the KKMP radio station. He has extensive experience in power, water, wastewater, and solid waste services. He serves as a member of the Domestic Policy Recovery Committee for the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers.

when you throw extreme temperatures into the mix, it becomes even more dangerous. Trash collection workers have to stay hydrated to avoid heatstroke, a real and serious risk in our hot and humid weather.

Other dangers include exposure to hazardous materials in the trash bins. Trash collectors suffer injuries from broken glass, used medical needles, nails from construction debris, chemicals, paint, and many other waste items that are dangerous when tossed mindlessly into a trash collection bin. This is another good argument for why we need to properly sort and dispose of our garbage.

Overhead obstacles such as low-hanging electrical wires,

See **FILTHY** on Next Page



Gary Sword, who is chairman of the Universal Garbage Collection Task Force, meets with representatives of CNMI trash collection companies to share with them the Universal Garbage Collection initiative.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

‘Now, more than ever, we need to come together’

Editor’s Note: The following is the text of the remarks the author gave at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce’s General Membership Meeting yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.

The last time I spoke here I talked about the lessons I learned from a challenging year and about the partnerships we have made to move our islands forward.

Mainly, I talked about all of us—private sector, nonprofits, and your government—working together to achieve common goals and solve our Commonwealth’s most pressing problems. I also talked about communication and how continuing to maintain consistent discussions is important to me and your businesses. At the end of the day, your success is our success.

Community-based collaboration is the key to our Commonwealth’s success, and I take your feedback seriously as governor.

A big issue that has been brought up to my attention is our new Munis financial system, which I understand is a concern for vendors.

When our Secretary of Finance Dave Atalig presented to the Chamber in October, he outlined our goal for more fiscal transparency and making our processes more efficient and effective.

As you all know, we converted to a new Financial Management Information System [and] Tyler Munis and we had some expected transition issues converting invoices from JDE software to Munis. We should be good now and the [Atalig] has assured me that vendors are getting paid, and we want to thank our business community for being patient as we get through this huge technology change.

Finance is working with all our departments to train staff, improve productivity, and correct any issues during this first stage of implementation. I will ensure that Finance continues to improve implementation so that we can get to a better place with this new process, and I thank you all for your understanding and patience.

Another issue that has been brought up is the status of non-profit ARPA funds. Secretary Dave has met with MANGO and other nonprofits to go over guidelines for nonprofits to apply for this funding.

The SOF and I finalized the awards for those non-profits who submitted applications for assistance and, although we cannot award everyone’s full request, I am happy to share that we can

support the non-profit organizations in the Commonwealth get funding through ARPA. I have asked the SOF to inform those of their awards and we will be setting up the formal award presentation to each non-profit in the next couple of weeks.

I have asked CEDA (CDA) to assist our small business community with grants to get their business up and running again. With about \$20 million available for small businesses, the goal when assisting our small businesses in the Commonwealth is to get our economy back up and running. We want to see our private sector employ our local people and help us get back to where we were heading before the pandemic. I encourage each one of you to contact CEDA for assistance. My administration is pro-business and we want to see you all survive and succeed.

The main restriction of ARPA is that we cannot use these funds for any pension obligation and to reduce or subsidize any state or Commonwealth tax rates. Other restrictions are that we cannot pay for anything prior to March 2021. As for what happens if we do not use these funds before we need to, which is December 2024, then we will need to return the funds to the U.S. Treasury.

I know the Secretary of Finance will make sure we spend these funds way before then as the goal of my administration is to infuse monies into our community to assist the private sector and stir economic development [on] our islands. We need to make sure we commit these dollars by December 2024 and we can seek extension up to December 2026 for projects committed and encumbered by December 2024. All projects must be done by December 2026 or we will need to return remaining funds and for any projects not completed, we will need to fund it to completion with local funds.

Lastly, with the rise in COVID-19 cases in our community, I am aware that many have expressed concern and fear. I will say that [the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.], our [Governor’s COVID-19] Task Force, and I are working on new protocols to protect our community and to prepare for the possible threat of the new omicron variant.

The protocols are currently being reviewed by the attorney general. We will notify you all once it has been approved.

Since the beginning of 2020, my administration through the Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC has implemented strict, but necessary, constraints on activities throughout the Commonwealth to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 throughout our community.

By RALPH DLG TORRES

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ralph DLG Torres is governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.



Due in large part to the quick implementation of these risk mitigation measures, the ongoing protective measures at the borders, the successful vaccination efforts, as well as the cooperation of the community in adhering to guidance from CNMI health officials, the CNMI still remains a safe place as hospitalizations remain low and primarily [among] unvaccinated residents.

Our goal now is to shift focus toward protection against increased hospitalization that would overwhelm CHCC and private clinics and to ultimately safeguard vulnerable residents like our *man’amko* and people with health ailments. We also need to encourage more of our people to be vaccinated.

During my time as governor, the policy decisions I make have always been in the best interest of our economy and for our people.

I appreciate the value you all bring to the table. Every day you are open for business, we come closer to our goals of a world-class tourism destination, a strong education system, a safe and resilient community, and a community of opportunity and promise. We know as a government that we must do a better job in ensuring your success so we all can succeed.

Now, more than ever, we need to come together, stay vigilant about our health without causing widespread panic, and continue to make the Marianas a first-choice destination.

Let’s work together to normalize our tourism so that vaccinated visitors can come and enjoy our beautiful islands and our warm hospitality. This is what we can do to help minimize the negative effects of this economic loss. It’s all about partnerships and communication.

For now, please continue to follow updates from CHCC and my office for the latest and most accurate information regarding the coronavirus. We continue to monitor the situation closely, and if you need any information, please contact my office or CHCC.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR**Grandstanding poli-tricks!**

It was very clear to me that Pedro Paduna R. DL Guerrero was outright “grandstanding and poli-tricking for Arnold and Dave with his public outburst to complain about the Democrat Party chair and vice chair. This is the same Paduna who told me to shut up in our strategy meeting when I was pushing for the former independents to join the Democrat Party and it should be noted that Uncle Herman R. DL Guerrero even apologized to me for his brother’s ugly and unacceptable behavior. Paduna has a history of being disrespectful but he was treated with the utmost respect as he was the leader in our strategy sessions but it seems he doesn’t respect leadership unless he is at the helm.

First, he is not a Central Executive Committee member and when a person is given “proxy” powers, it is a formal matter that is supported with formal notification, which did not happen. Paduna just showed up being disruptive in what was clearly a closed-door meeting for CEC members only, thinking he could run the show, which was disrespectful and totally unacceptable.

Secondly, Paduna needs to be made aware of the fact that Nola and Danny are not running for office, so his complaints about them is really moot. Furthermore, Paduna has not been active with the Party since the addition of the former independents and for him to show up grandstanding and complaining seems more like it was planned than happenstance, especially when he ended up supporting Arnold and Dave invoking the lie of them “restoring trust” when they are part of the reason there is no trust. I personally think he was a Republican spy all along and I guess he thinks voters are stupid too, just like the governor who thinks he can tell us anything and we will accept it at face value.

Third, it was also Arnold and Dave who called for the meeting and they were entertained merely out of genuine respect, but now it is clear even that was a set up for Paduna to try and sling mud on the Party. Arnold and Dave are diehard Republicans who would never run as Democrats. Now we can see why Arnold and Dave called for the meeting—just to grandstand and do some poli-tricking to try and improve their chances, which are dismal. As most of us with common sense know, they can’t restore a trust when they did nothing but just sit back and watch the governor destroy people’s trust.

Paduna wants voters to think he is a Democrat who is dis-

satisfied with the leadership when he hasn’t been a full-blooded Democrat since 1981. He has been aligned with Republicans and has worked for and with the Republicans until recently when the FBI conducted their raids and it was obvious Gove. Torres’ political career is on borrowed time. Now that Arnold and Dave have surfaced, he wants to change banners again because the Democrat Party wouldn’t let him take over, which tells me his poli-tricking show was more about spite, vengeance, and poli-tricking as he isn’t fooling anyone.

Paduna, along with Arnold and Dave, know that the Democrat chair and vice chair are nice people who don’t want to deal with the ugly poli-tricks that are being played but there are others in the Party who don’t mind doing the heavy lifting and getting dirty to clean up things. So Paduna, Arnold, and Dave and any other Republicans had better learn how to play fair and above board.

FYI, Paduna, you are the only one leaving the Party for politics and Rep. Sablan and her running mate will represent a brighter future, not restoring the same old GOP BS as the days of the “good ol’ boy Republicans” are over.

Ambrose M. Bennett

Kagman, Saipan

FILTHY

From Page 8

communication wires, and even tree branches are a challenge for garbage trucks and workers. Sometimes tree branches have wires tangled within them, making them camouflaged and difficult to see. There is always the threat of electrocution.

Road incidents are a concern for waste and recycling workers.

Being hit by a vehicle always remains a top worry for sanitation workers and one of the leading causes of fatalities in the industry in the U.S. Distracted or careless drivers zooming around a truck and hitting a worker loading materials into the back of a truck are incidents that plague the industry. When you see a truck, please slow down and proceed with caution.

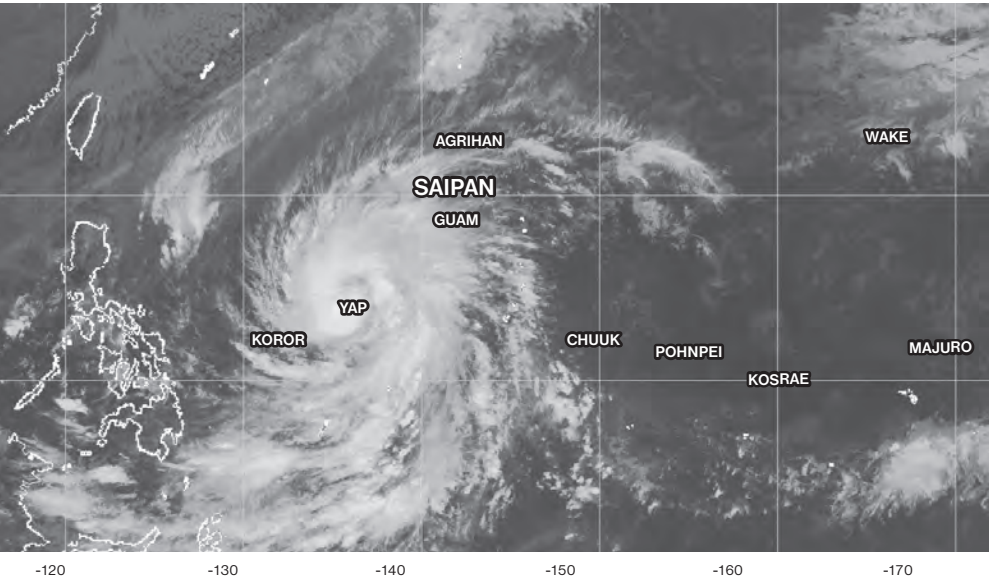
During this COVID-19 emergency, we’ve seen excessive amounts of garbage from personal protective equipment to disposable containers. They can all host the virus and facilitate the

spread of the disease. The New England Journal of Medicine found that the coronavirus remains viable on surfaces for several hours, surviving longer on plastic and stainless steel than on copper and cardboard. Accumulation must be avoided, which makes the continuity of sanitation services even more essential.

I tip my hat and offer an acclamation of thanks for the untiring efforts of our trash collection companies and their workers. The next time you come across a garbage collector, be sure to thank him or her for their service.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
85°	76°	87°	78°	87°	78°	87°	78°	87°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:14 AM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Radar this morning shows scattered showers developing around the Marianas this morning as Tropical Storm Nyatoh, west of the region, starts to slowly to turn towards the northwest. Ipan buoy is reporting seas around 6 feet and an altimetry pass to the east shows seas between 6 and 8 feet. Moderate to fresh southeast winds prevail across the region.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:27 AM	5:44 PM
Friday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM
Saturday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM
Sunday	6:29 AM	5:45 PM
Monday	6:29 AM	5:45 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	3:54 AM	3:53 PM	-
Friday	4:56 AM	4:42 PM	-
Saturday	6:02 AM	5:38 PM	-
Sunday	7:11 AM	6:40 PM	-
Monday	8:19 AM	7:46 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	72° / 59°	
Beijing	Sunny	45° / 21°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°	
Honolulu	Showers	82° / 73°	
London	Sunny	43° / 34°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	73° / 53°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°	
Melbourne	Rain	66° / 55°	
Miami	Mostly Sunny	78° / 71°	
New York	Showers	53° / 36°	
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 39°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	39° / 28°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	48° / 36°	
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 39°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	70° / 54°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 48°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	45° / 32°	
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	50° / 39°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	54° / 34°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
6:13 AM	High Tide	1.60	
11:39 AM	Low Tide	0.69	
5:26 PM	High Tide	1.92	
-	-	-	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7				
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam	UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1					
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

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Asia

US panel backs first-of-its-kind COVID-19 pill

WASHINGTON (AP)—A panel of U.S. health advisers on Tuesday narrowly backed a closely watched COVID-19 pill from Merck, setting the stage for a likely authorization of the first drug that Americans could take at home to treat the coronavirus.

The Food and Drug Administration panel voted 13-10 that the antiviral drug's benefits outweigh its risks, including potential birth defects if used during pregnancy.

"I see this as an incredibly difficult decision with many more questions than answers," said panel chair Dr. Lindsey Baden of Harvard Medical School, who voted in favor of the drug. He said FDA would have to carefully tailor the drug's use for patients who stand to benefit most.

The recommendation came after hours of debate about the drug's modest benefits and potential safety issues. Most experts backing the treatment stressed that it should not be used by anyone who is pregnant and called on FDA to recommend extra precautions before the drug is prescribed, such as pregnancy tests for women of child-bearing age.

The vote specifically backed the drug for adults with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 who face the greatest risks, including older people



AP

This undated file image provided by Merck & Co. shows their new antiviral medication molnupiravir.

and those with conditions like obesity and asthma. Most experts also said the drug shouldn't be used in vaccinated people, who weren't part of Merck's research and haven't been shown to benefit.

The FDA isn't bound by the panel's recommendation and is expected to make its own decision before year's end. The antiviral is already authorized in the U.K.

The drug, molnupiravir, could provide a much-needed weapon against the virus as colder weather pushes case counts higher and U.S. officials brace for the arrival of the new omicron variant.

Merck hasn't specifically tested its drug against the new variant but said it should have some potency based on its effectiveness against other strains of coronavirus.

That uncertainty frustrated many panelists as they grappled with whether to back the treatment for millions of

Americans.

"With no data saying it works with new variants, I really think we need to be careful about saying that this is the way to go," said Dr. David Hardy of Charles Drew University School of Medicine and Science, who ultimately voted to back the drug.

On Friday, Merck released updated data that paint a less compelling picture of the drug's effectiveness than just a few weeks earlier.

Merck said final study results showed molnupiravir reduced hospitalization and death by 30% among adults infected with the coronavirus, when compared with adults taking a placebo. That effect was significantly less than the 50% reduction it first announced based on incomplete results.

For many panelists, the modest effect wasn't enough to outweigh the drug's potential toxicity to human fetuses.

'Fed to tighten credit faster than expected'

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell took a sharp and unexpected turn Tuesday toward tightening credit for consumers and businesses in the face of mounting concerns about high inflation.

Powell signaled that the Fed will likely act more quickly to phase out its ultra-low-interest rate policies even as the emergence of the new omicron variant of COVID-19 has raised fresh doubts about the future of the economy and the direction of inflation.

The Fed chair told the Senate Banking Committee that the central bank's policymakers will discuss at their next meeting in mid-December whether to accelerate the reduction of their monthly bond purchases, which have been

intended to lower long-term borrowing costs. The Fed just announced those reductions in early November at a pace that would end the bond buying in June. But on Tuesday, Powell signaled that the Fed is inclined to end those purchases several months before then.



Powell

Doing so would put the Fed on a path to begin raising its key short-term interest rate as early as the first half of next year. That rate has been pegged at nearly zero since last March, when the coronavirus sent the economy into a deep recession. A higher Fed rate would, in turn, raise borrowing costs for mortgages, credit cards and some business loans.

Stock prices tumbled after Powell's comments, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost more than 650 points, or

nearly 2%, for the day. Very low interest rates, nurtured by the Fed, have been a key factor in driving share prices to all-time highs since the pandemic struck.

"He was decidedly more hawkish in tone than I expected and, I think, than the financial markets expected," said Kathy Bostjancic, chief U.S. financial economist at Oxford Economics. (Hawks generally favor higher borrowing costs to quell inflation, while doves typically emphasize lower rates to fuel hiring.)

Fed policymakers have come under pressure from a sharp jump in inflation, with consumer prices having soared 6.2% in October from a year earlier, the highest such inflation rate in 31 years. In response, some Fed officials in recent weeks had already started to push for a faster tapering of the central bank's bond purchases.

World

Authorities: Student kills 3, wounds eight at Mic. school



AP

Parents walk away with their kids from the Meijer's parking lot, where many students gathered following an active shooter situation at Oxford High School, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021, in Oxford, Mich.

OXFORD TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP)—A 15-year-old sophomore opened fire at his Michigan high school on Tuesday, killing three students and wounding eight other people, including one teacher, authorities said.

Oakland County Under-sheriff Mike McCabe said at a news conference that investigators were still trying to determine a motive for the shooting at Oxford High School in Oxford Township, a community of about 22,000 people roughly 30 miles (48 kilometers) north of Detroit.

McCabe said he was aware of allegations circulating on social media that there had been threats of a shooting at the roughly 1,700-student school before Tuesday's attack, but he cautioned against believing that narrative until investigators can look into it.

He also downplayed the significance of an incident in early November when a deer head was thrown off the school roof, which he said was "absolutely unrelated" to the shooting. The vandalism prompted school administrators to post two letters to parents on the school's website this month, saying they were responding to rumors of a threat against the school but had found none.

Authorities didn't immediately release the suspect's name, but McCabe said deputies arrested him within minutes of arriving at the school in response to a flood of 911 calls about the attack, which happened shortly before 1 p.m. He said the deputies also recovered the semi-automatic handgun and several magazines used to store ammunition that the suspect used in the attack.

"He fired multiple shots," McCabe said. "Somewhere in the area of 15 to 20."

The three students who were killed were a 16-year-old boy and two girls, ages 14 and 17, McCabe said. Two of the wounded were undergoing surgery as of 5 p.m. and the six others who were wounded were in stable condition, he said.

McCabe said the suspect's parents visited their son where he's being held and advised him not to talk to investigators, as is his right. Police must seek permission from a juvenile suspect's parents or guardian to speak with them, he added.

Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald issued a statement Tuesday evening saying her office expects to issue charges quickly and that an update would be given Wednesday.

US expected to toughen testing requirement for travelers

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration is expected to take steps in the coming days to toughen testing requirements for international travelers to the U.S., including both vaccinated and unvaccinated people, amid the spread of the new omicron variant of the coronavirus.

The precise testing protocols were still being finalized ahead of a speech by President Joe Biden planned for Thursday on the nation's plans to control the COVID-19 pandemic during the winter season, according to a senior administration official who said some details could still change. Among the policies being considered is a requirement that all air travelers to the U.S. be tested for COVID-19 within a day of boarding their flight. Currently those who are fully

vaccinated may present a test taken within three days of boarding.

"CDC is evaluating how to make international travel as safe as possible, including pre-departure testing closer to the time of flight and considerations around additional post-arrival testing and self-quarantines," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Tuesday.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the administration's plans before the announcement, said options under consideration also include post-arrival testing requirements or even self-quarantines.

The expected move comes just weeks after the U.S. largely reopened its borders to fully vaccinated foreign travelers on Nov. 8.

Much remains unknown about the new variant, which has been identified in more than 20 countries but not yet in the U.S., including whether it is more contagious, whether it makes people more seriously ill, and whether it can thwart the vaccine. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, said more would be known about the omicron strain in two to four weeks as scientists grow and test lab samples of the virus.

As he sought to quell public concern about the new variant, Biden said that in his Thursday remarks, "I'll be putting forward a detailed strategy outlining how we're going to fight COVID this winter -- not with shutdowns or lockdowns but with more widespread vaccinations, boosters, testing, and more."

Asia

S. Korea's daily virus jump exceeds 5,000 for first time

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's daily jump in coronavirus infections exceeded 5,000 for the first time since the start of the pandemic, as a delta-driven surge also pushed hospitalizations and deaths to record highs.

With the spread threatening to overwhelm hospital capacities, health experts have called for officials to reimpose stricter social distancing rules that were eased last month to soften the pandemic's impact on the economy.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said most of the new 5,123 cases reported Wednesday came from the capital Seoul and its surrounding metropolitan region, where officials earlier said more than 80% of intensive care units designated for COVID-19 patients were already occupied.

More than 720 virus patients were in serious or critical condition, also marking a new high. The country's fatalities reached 3,658 after seeing between 30 and 50 deaths a day in recent weeks.

The KDCA also said health workers are conducting genetic sequencing tests on a couple who arrived from Nigeria to determine whether they have been infected with the new coronavirus variant omicron. The coun-



Passengers wearing face masks and face shields amid the coronavirus pandemic arrive at the Incheon International Airport in Incheon, South Korea, Nov. 30, 2021.

try has yet to confirm a case of omicron, which is seen as potentially more infectious than previous strains of the virus.

The government had eased social distancing rules at the start of November and fully reopened schools starting Nov. 22 in what officials described as the first steps toward restoring some pre-pandemic normalcy. In allowing larger social gatherings and longer indoor dining hours, officials had hoped that the country's improving vaccination rates would help keep hospitalizations and deaths down even if the virus continues to spread.

However, health workers are now wrestling with a rise in serious cases and deaths

among people in their 60s and older, who had either rejected vaccines or whose immunities have waned after being inoculated early in the mass immunization campaign that began in February.

The spread has forced the government from taking further steps to ease social distancing, but officials have so far resisted calls to restore stricter gathering rules, citing economic concerns and people's fatigue and frustration over extended virus restrictions.

"We cannot retreat to the past by reversing our efforts to gradually restore normal life," President Moon Jae-in said during a virus meeting Monday.

Japan confirms case of omicron variant

TOKYO (AP)—Japan confirmed on Tuesday its first case of the new omicron coronavirus variant, a Namibian diplomat who recently arrived from his country, officials said.

Chief Cabinet Secretary said the patient, a man in his 30s, tested positive upon arrival at Narita airport on Sunday and was isolated and is being treated at a hospital.

Later Tuesday, Health Minister Shigeyuki Goto identified the patient as a diplomat from Namibia.

A genome analysis at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases confirmed Tuesday that he was infected with the new variant, which was first identified in South Africa.

The patient was initially showing no symptoms, but now has a fever, Goto said. Health ministry officials said he received his second Moderna vaccine in July.

A total of 70 other passengers, including the patient's two family members on the same flight, were identified as having close contact, but they have all tested negative

and are self-isolating while being monitored remotely by the Japanese health authorities. If they do not cooperate, their names will be released as a penalty, Goto said.

Ten crew members of the plane did not enter Japan and continued their flight to a next destination.

The 40 Tokyo residents identified as having close contact are being required to quarantine at facilities designated by the the capital's metropolitan government instead of their homes to ensure anti-virus measures, Governor Yuriko Koike told reporters.

Matsuno said the government will maintain strict border controls and will step up its capacity to conduct genome analyses of the new variant.

Japan announced on Monday that it will ban all foreign visitors beginning Tuesday as an emergency precaution against the variant, tentatively through the end of the year. The government is also requiring Japanese nationals and foreigners with resident permits to quarantine 14 days

following entry.

The World Health Organization warned Monday that the global risk from the omicron variant is "very high" based on the early evidence, saying it could lead to surges with "severe consequences."

Despite the lack of information about the new variant, Japan will start giving booster shots Wednesday as scheduled to those who have completed vaccination eight months ago or earlier, officials said.

The new variant scare comes just as Japan was expanding its business and social activity following the sharp decline of new daily cases. So far, Japan has only re-tightened its border control. Japan reported just 76 new cases nationwide for an accumulated total of 1.72 million cases and 18,351 deaths.

On Tuesday, Japan's Self Defense Force closed down its mass inoculation center, which was launched in late May to help bolster a nationwide vaccination drive. About 77% of the Japanese have been fully vaccinated.

World

Brazil sees two omicron cases

SAO PAULO (AP)—Health officials in Brazil have reported the country's first confirmed cases of the omicron variant in two travelers arriving from South Africa, the first such cases in Latin America.

The Sao Paulo state health secretariat said a 41-year-old man and a 37-year-old woman are in isolation. The two had their tests taken on Nov. 25 and showed light symptoms of the disease at the time.

The secretariat statement said both travelers arrived in Brazil on Nov. 23 and took a PCR test before a trip scheduled for two days later. Their positive test results were collected at the Guarulhos international airport, outside Sao Paulo, before a return flight to South Africa.

"After the positive result, the couple was instructed to remain in isolation at home. Both are being monitored by state and municipal (authorities), as well as their respective family members," said the Sao Paulo health secretariat, which added that neither of the two are registered in the state's vaccination platform.

"An initial investigation did not identify them being vaccinated anywhere else," it said.

Sao Paulo city hall's health

secretariat said the couple lives in South Africa and was visiting Brazil. It did not disclose their nationalities.

Another potential case of omicron has been under investigation by Brazilian authorities since Sunday.

The two Brazilians are the first confirmed cases in Latin America, which has suffered heavily from the coronavirus pandemic. Brazil alone has reported more than 600,000 deaths, a figure that analysts believe to be undercounted.

Brazil does not require COVID-19 vaccination from foreign travelers entering the country.

Earlier on Tuesday, Japan and France reported their first cases of the omicron variant, while new findings indicate the mutant coronavirus was already in Europe close to a week before South Africa sounded the alarm. It was last Wednesday, Nov. 24, that South African authorities reported the existence of the highly mutated virus to the World Health Organization.

Much remains unknown about the new variant, including whether it is more contagious, as some health authorities suspect, whether it makes people more seriously ill, and whether it can thwart the vaccine.

Brazil's health agency Anvisa said the entry took place before Sunday's federal government decision to block passengers arriving from South Africa. The South American country has blocked flights originating from or with stop overs in South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Sao Paulo Gov. João Doria said the state's COVID-19 scientific committee will reassess the end of the mask mandates, which was expected to come into force on Dec. 11.

"We need to know the impact of this new variant" before deciding if removing masks is allowed outdoors, said Doria, who is also a presidential hopeful for next year's elections.

President Jair Bolsonaro, who has flouted health protocols since the beginning of the pandemic and remains unvaccinated, is insisting that social distancing policies should not be put back in place.

Many mayors of Brazilian cities are wondering whether they should keep scheduled end of year festivities and February's Carnival due to fears COVID-19 infection rates could soar again.

'NATO allies must prepare for worst in Ukraine'

RIGA, Latvia (AP)—NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg warned Tuesday that the U.S.-led military organization must prepare for the worst as concern mounts that Russia could be preparing to invade Ukraine.

NATO is worried about a Russian buildup of heavy equipment and troops near Ukraine's northern border, not far from Belarus. Ukraine says Moscow kept about 90,000 troops in the area following massive war games in western Russia earlier this year, and could easily mobilize them.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said last week that his country's intelligence service had uncovered plans for a Russia-backed coup d'état. Russia denied the allegation and rejected the assertion that it is planning to invade Ukraine.

"You can discuss whether the likelihood for an incursion is 20% or 80%, it doesn't matter. We need to be prepared for the worst," Stoltenberg told reporters in Riga, Latvia, after chairing talks among NATO foreign min-

isters focused on the threat posed by Russia.

"There is no certainty, no clarity about exactly what are the Russian intentions, and they may actually evolve and change," the NATO chief continued. Referring to Russia's seizure in 2014 of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, Stoltenberg added: "They've done it before."

Asked about the decision to activate NATO's crisis response planning system, which helps analyze potential crises and prepare a response to them, he said: "Allies agree that we need to have the plans in place to be sure that we are always able to protect all allies against any potential threat."

The United States has shared intelligence with European allies warning of a possible invasion. European diplomats acknowledge the Russian troop movements, but some countries have played down the threat of any imminent invasion ordered

by Moscow.

"We are very concerned about the movements we've seen along Ukraine's border. We know that Russia often

combines those efforts with internal efforts to destabilize a country. That's part of the playbook, and we're looking at it very closely," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

"Any renewed aggression would trigger serious consequences," Blinken warned.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas also said "Russia would have to pay a high price for any form of aggression."

Maas said "honest and sustainable de-escalation steps, which can only go via the route of talks, are all the more important now."

Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 after Ukraine's Moscow-friendly president was driven from power by mass protests. Weeks later, Russia threw its weight behind a separatist insurgency that broke out in Ukraine's east.



Stoltenberg

IN MEMORIAM



Glicerio 'Eli' Del Mundo Arago

Born in Mabini, Batangas, the Philippines

He has lived a life devoted to service to his countrymen.

He is also one of the very few accomplished Filipinos in the Asia-Pacific region: the Philippine Honorary Consul to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the senior vice president and chief finance officer of the largest private sector employer in the Western Pacific, Tan Holdings Corporation.

Eli, as he is fondly called, identifies himself with those in need and share their struggles in the deepest way. He has been a paragon of commitment and selfless public service to the Filipinos in the CNMI for the past 35 years.

He has joined his Creator on November 24, 2021, a day before Thanksgiving Day.

Eli steadily dedicated his time and resources to assist the needy, champion the exploited, and help the unable. He was as caring as generous as the dignitary as he was a personal friend or family members; an ever-discernible presence felt throughout events that call for joyful celebration but also in the forefront of altruistic undertaking that dispense immediate help and humanitarian assistance throughout the community, most especially towards his fellow Filipinos.

He has nobly and humbly represented all Filipino overseas workers and residents in his graceful appearances and remarkable contributions in the CNMI community. Eli was candidly unique in many ways, but one thing in particular that makes him stand out was his character. He represented the distinct bearing of a respected leader yet always maintained the natural kindness of friend, extended help discreetly, kindly and indiscriminately.

He treated everyone the same: without partiality to favor and benefit only a few but has in fact shown many, many nameless but thankful individuals.

A true hero is one who save you at a time of need but never demanded gratitude or acknowledgement.
This was Eli's trademark.

Infinitely deserving of the prestigious 2000 Bagong Bayani (New Hero) Award of the Philippine government, he was presented with, Eli, until his very last day lives on in our hearts as a humble hero.

Thank you, Eli Arago, for all the great things you have done selflessly. Rest in peace, assured that your memory will forever linger on as the hero you will always be.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021

**11:00 AM — ARRIVAL AT SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (DOMESTIC TERMINAL)
PROCESSION TO BORJA FUNERAL HOME**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2021

**9:00 AM — PUBLIC VIEWING | 11:00 AM — MEMORIAL MASS
OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHEDRAL**

Please Wear Mask & Observe Social Distancing

Environment

Improving air quality in the CNMI

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

Never have we been as conscious of the air we breathe until this pandemic. We all have been advised to wear masks for protection—to keep ourselves from getting sick from COVID-19. But the fact is, even before this virus came, there was already something in the air that could get us sick—pollution.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, an independent global health research center at the University of Washington, reported a 17.1% increase, from 2009 to 2019,

on the risk air pollution has on disability and morbidity here in the CNMI. In 2017, IHME also reported that asthma prevalence on island is at 11.1%—at that time more than double the U.S. average of 5.45%.

Carey Demapan, Clean Air Program branch manager at the Division of Environmental Quality - Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality, recently shared with Saipan Tribune some of the air quality programs they have been implementing in an effort to safeguard all our health by bettering the quality of air in the CNMI.

Just recently, DEQ replaced the old diesel tractor that the

Division of Agriculture has been using since 1995, with a brand new tractor with a cleaner burning engine.

“Being exposed to diesel emissions can lead to asthma, respiratory illnesses, and can worsen heart and lung disease, especially in children and the elderly. By replacing old diesel engines with newer more efficient technology, we can help improve air quality and protect human health,” Demapan said.

The new tractor was made possible through an \$81,411 grant DEQ received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, under the Die-



From left, Division of Environmental Quality - Clean Air Program air technician Tyler Flores and branch manager Carey Demapan hand over a new John Deere agriculture tractor to the Division of Agriculture, represented by Gus Aguon and director Jack Ogumoro. This sub-award is made possible through the Diesel Emission Reduction Act grant received by DEQ from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

sel Emission Reduction Act. Last year, DEQ secured the grant with DOA as a sub-awardee, to replace the old agriculture tractor.

Out with old diesel engines

“The purpose of DERA is to protect human health and improve air quality by reducing harmful emissions from diesel engines,” Demapan said.

USEPA states that DERA grant funds can be used for diesel emission reduction projects like replacing early engine, vehicle, or equipment with certified engine configurations. Eligible diesel vehicles, engines, and equipment include school buses, locomotive engines, marine engines, and Class 5 to Class 8 heavy-duty highway vehicles.

Non-road diesel engines, equipment, or vehicles used in construction, handling of cargo, agriculture, mining, or energy production are also eligible.

“After going through the CNMI procurement process, the lowest bid was selected and a new 67 HP John Deere Utility Tractor with two attachments was purchased. The tractor arrived in the CNMI in August 2021 and has been used since then.”

As for the selection process, Demapan said that of the phone calls they made to numerous public and private agencies, they identified the old diesel tractor owned by DOA to be eligible for replacement under the grant, especially given that the DERA grant has specific requirements on annual mileage, gross vehicle weight rating, ownership time frame, and more to determine eligibility.

Demapan said the engine of the old tractor must be destroyed or made inoperable to

ensure that it would not continue to emit air pollutants. The engine block of the old tractor was pierced and then given to a local recycling company to be crushed. The scrap metal will be recycled.

“It is important to phase out old diesel engines because they are inefficient at reducing emissions such as particulate matter and nitrogen oxides. Newer engines, like the one used in DOA’s new tractor, have been tested and are known to comply with EPA’s strictest emission standards.”

Aside from the tractor, DEQ also intends to use a portion of the funding for media outreach on diesel emissions.

Free indoor air quality testing

In addition to phasing out old diesel engines, the Clean Air Program also covers vehicle emission tests for diesel-powered motor vehicles; issuances [or non-issuances] of permits to facilities with air emissions; compliance inspections; indoor air quality monitoring; issuances of notices of violations; and responding to citizen complaints. “We conduct visible emissions certification for all diesel-powered motor vehicles in the CNMI. Based on local regulations, no diesel car can emit smoke for more than five consecutive seconds so DEQ tests these vehicles to ensure they meet this limit,” Demapan said.

Owners of diesel-powered motor vehicles, when registering at the CNMI Bureau of Motor Vehicles, must provide an emission certificate proving that their vehicles have not only been tested but also passed applicable regulations. Applications are available at the DEQ website, to be submitted at the BECQ office at the Gualo

Rai Center on Middle Road.

To check indoor air quality, the DEQ Clean Air Program also offers free radon testing.

“We conduct free radon tests for all residential homes, public buildings, and schools,” Demapan said. “Radon is a gas that comes from the decay of uranium found in soil and rocks. It can enter your home or building through cracks in the foundation. It can be harmful to human health if it accumulates in a room without ventilation.” DEQ’s Clean Air Program also covers a Permitting Program that permits and inspects facilities that release air emissions such as quarries, asphalt plants, and hotels utilizing large generators. Demapan said that in the future, DEQ hopes to have all facilities in the CNMI permitted while continuing to offer radon and emission test services to the public.

When asked what we, in the community, can all do to help, Demapan asked for the public to be mindful when purchasing vehicles, generators, or other air-polluting engines or machines.

“Engines are categorized by Tiers between 1-4. We recommend that you choose Tier 4 engines since they are the most efficient at reducing air emissions. We also recommend that you service and maintain your vehicles regularly to reduce tailpipe emissions.”

Demapan also encourages the public to schedule radon tests for their homes or buildings, and to be vigilant and send any air related complaints their way.

To schedule a free radon test, or for more information on DEQ’s Clean Air Programs, contact (670) 664-8500, (670) 664-8516, or email deq.air@becq.gov.mp.



Commonwealth Judiciary Administrative Office

Guma' Hustisia / Iimwal Aweewe / House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 • Saipan, MP 96950

Telephone (670) 236-9700/9800 • Facsimile: (670) 236-9702 • Website: www.nmjudiciary.com

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Re-Announcement No. 22-011

POSITION TITLE: ARPA Administrative Officer
Department: Judiciary Administrative Office
Annual Salary Range: \$28,000 - \$30,000
Location: Saipan
Opening Date: 12/01/2021
Closing Date: Until Filled

Announcement No. 22-012

POSITION TITLE: ARPA Information Systems Project Coordinator
Department: Judiciary Administrative Office
Annual Salary Range: \$35,000 - \$40,000
Location: Saipan
Opening Date: 12/01/2021
Closing Date: Until Filled

Announcement No. 22-013

POSITION TITLE: Program Specialist
Department: Judiciary Administrative Office
Annual Salary Range: \$28,000 - \$30,000
Location: Saipan
Opening Date: 12/01/2021
Closing Date: Until Filled

Announcement No. 22-016

POSITION TITLE: Drug Court Peer Support Specialist
Department: Drug Court
Annual Salary Range: \$20,000 - \$25,000
Location: Saipan
Opening Date: 12/01/2021
Closing Date: Until Filled

Candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Must have a valid drivers' license and operate a court vehicle. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment. "Illegal drug" means a substance whose use or possession is controlled by federal law but that is not being used or possessed under the supervision of a licensed health care professional. (Controlled substances are listed in Schedules I-V of 21 C.F.R. Part 1308.)

Education completed in foreign colleges or universities may be used to meet the job qualification requirements if the applicant can show that foreign education is comparable to education received in accredited educational institutions in the United States.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such evidence when applying for Judiciary jobs. Education received in foreign colleges or universities will be considered if the candidate submits an evaluation of the coursework from: (a) an accredited U.S. college or university; or (b) a private professional organization specializing in interpretation of foreign educational credentials.

INTERESTED PERSONS PERSONS Application forms are available at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Kotten Tinian and Centron Hustisia in Rota during normal business hours except on weekends and holidays. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

NMI Judiciary
Human Resources
Guma' Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 236-9818
Cell. (670) 783-8592
Fax. (670) 236-9702
hr.judiciary@nmjudiciary.com

This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at <http://www.nmjudiciary.com>

The Judiciary reserves the right to rescind or cancel this JVA at any time without notice.

THE CNMI JUDICIARY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

Life & Style

Case against Jussie Smollett focuses on how ‘hoax’ unraveled

CHICAGO (AP)—Prosecutors’ case against Jussie Smollett has focused on how Chicago police say they determined that what they initially believed was a horrific hate crime was actually a fake assault staged by the ex-“Empire” actor with help from two brothers.

Testimony will continue Wednesday in the trial, which is expected to last about a week.

A lead investigator in the case, Michael Theis, said Tuesday that the brothers—who worked with Smollett on the Chicago set of “Empire”—detailed for police how the actor orchestrated the hoax. They said Smollett told them via text message to meet him “on the low,” paid for supplies including a clothesline later fashioned into a noose and took them for

a “dry run” prior to the January 2019 alleged attack.

Theis, who now is assistant director for research and development for the Chicago Police Department, said roughly two dozen detectives clocked some 3,000 hours on the investigation, rebutting a defense attorney’s statement that they rushed to judgment. He said police were excited when they were able to track the movements of two suspected attackers using surveillance video and cellphone and records from ride-sharing services.

“The crime was a hate crime, a horrible hate crime,” Theis said, noting Smollett—who is Black and gay—reported that his attackers put a noose around his neck and poured bleach on him. He said the case



Actor Jussie Smollett, center, arrives Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021, at the Leighton Criminal Courthouse for day two of his trial in Chicago. AP

had become national and international news and that “everybody from the mayor on down” wanted it solved, a reference to then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Defense attorney Neny Uche has said the brothers—who also worked on the set of “Empire”—attacked Smollett because they didn’t like him “because of who he is” and suggested Tuesday that the brothers were homophobic.

Smollett is charged with felony disorderly conduct for making what prosecutors say was a false police report. The class 4 felony carries a prison sentence of up to three years, but experts have said if Smollett is convicted he likely would be placed on probation and perhaps ordered to perform community service.

Author Alice Sebold apologizes to man cleared in 1981 rape

NEW YORK (AP)—Author Alice Sebold publicly apologized Tuesday to the man who was exonerated last week in the 1981 rape that was the basis for her memoir “Lucky” and said she was struggling with the role she played “within a system that sent an innocent man to jail.”

Anthony Broadwater, 61, was convicted in 1982 of raping Sebold when she was a student at Syracuse University. He served 16 years in prison. His conviction was overturned Nov. 22 after prosecutors reexamined the case and determined there were serious flaws in his arrest and trial.

In a statement released to The Associated Press and later posted on Medium, Sebold, the author of the novels “The

Lovely Bones” and “The Almost Moon,” wrote to Broadwater that she was truly sorry for what he’d been through.

“I am sorry most of all for the fact that the life you could have led was unjustly robbed from you, and I know that no apology can change what happened to you and never will,” she wrote.

She wrote that “as a traumatized 18-year-old rape victim, I chose to put my faith in the American legal system. My goal in 1982 was justice—not to perpetuate injustice. And certainly not to forever, and irreparably, alter a young man’s life by the very crime that had altered mine.”

In a statement issued by his lawyers, Broadwater said he was “relieved that she has apologized.”

Families turn down Travis Scott offer to pay for funerals

HOUSTON (AP)—Several families of the 10 people who died from injuries in a massive crowd surge at the Astroworld festival have turned down an offer by headliner Travis Scott to pay for their loved ones’ funeral costs.

Attorneys for the families of four of the victims said Tuesday that they received a letter from Scott’s attorney, Daniel Petrocelli, in which the offer was made.

In a letter sent Nov. 24 to the attorneys for the family of 9-year-old Ezra Blount, Petrocelli said Scott extended his “deepest sympathies and condolences” to Ezra’s father, Treston Blount, and Scott had wanted to reach out personally “but does not wish to intrude on Mr. Blount’s privacy during his time of grieving.”

Ezra was the youngest person to die from injuries suffered during Scott’s concert at

the sold-out festival on Nov. 5 that was attended by 50,000 people. The others who died ranged in age from 14 to 27. Some 300 people were treated at the festival site and 13 were hospitalized.

“Travis is devastated by the tragedy that occurred at the Astroworld Festival and grieves for the families whose loved ones died or were injured. Travis is committed to doing his part to help the fami-

lies who have suffered and begin the long process of healing in the Houston community,” Petrocelli wrote.

In his reply, Robert Hilliard, an attorney representing Treston Blount in a lawsuit against Scott, the concert promoter and others, declined the offer, saying that while he believes Scott feels remorse, Scott must see “that he bears some of the responsibility for this tragedy.”

Vegas police confirm case involving R&B singer Trey Songz

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Police said Tuesday they’re investigating sexual assault allegations involving R&B artist Trey Songz at a Las Vegas Strip hotel.

In a statement, Las Vegas police said sex crimes detectives received a complaint about a Sunday incident involving the singer and actor

whose name is Tremaine Aldon Neverson. Sunday was his 37th birthday.

Neverson was cooperating with the investigation and no arrests have been made, said Officer Misael Parra, a Las Vegas police spokesman. Parra declined to name the hotel.

A representative for Neverson didn’t immediately re-

spond to messages.

Neverson has had several legal issues in the past. He was arrested in January at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, but criminal charges were not filed after he was accused of scuffling with police officers over complaints that he wasn’t following coronavirus protocols and other rules at

the AFC Championship game.

As Songz, he’s a three-time Grammy-nominated singer. He debuted in 2005 with the album “I Gotta Make It” and earned his third No. 1 last year on Billboard’s Top R&B Albums chart with “Back Home.” His other two chart-topping albums are “Trigga” and “Tremaine The Album.”

Woman tired of couple’s constant, intrusive drama

DEAR ABBY: My husband has a “best friend” from childhood I’ll call “Artie,” but they have little in common anymore. Finding things to do with him and his wife is a struggle. We like to travel, so we always invite them along, but Artie says “no” to everything. His wife, “Ann,” and I are pretty close.

The problem? We all spend a lot of time together (at our home) and they fight constantly! It doesn’t matter where they are. Ann shows up at our house in the middle of the night needing a place to sleep. Their fighting has ruined more gatherings than I have fingers and toes to count. I feel like our life is consumed by their toxic relationship. My husband tells me I should just “ignore it.” But he’s not the one who has to tend to his friend’s wife EVERY day. I don’t know what to do. Help!

EXHAUSTED IN ALABAMA

DEAR EXHAUSTED: What you do is draw the line. Tell your husband the unrelenting warfare in his friend’s marriage is more than you care to handle. Tell Ann the same thing, and that if she can’t sleep under her own roof, she’ll have to find other accommodations than your house in the middle of the night. Urge her to get counseling and to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-7233) or a local

domestic violence shelter if Artie is violent. As to socializing with them as a couple—on trips, yet (!)—explain to your husband that you have lost your appetite for it, and if he wants to see his childhood friend, he should do it without you.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I’ve been married for six years. When I met my wife, we decided she’d move into my home with her teenaged boys. I told them upfront how important it is to me to keep a clean home. When they come home from college, they leave a mess in the kitchen, and it drives me crazy. This has been going on since we married, and I’m ready to tell my wife they are not allowed back into my home.

I have reminded them many times about cleaning up after themselves, but their mess continues. I’m close to losing my temper over it. It angers me to see grown men in my home do this. It feels like they are blatantly disrespecting me. When I was away for a year, my wife constantly complained to me about their lack of cleanliness as well. Am I in the wrong?

TASKMASTER IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR TASKMASTER: You are not wrong. Remind the “boys”—without exploding—that you have asked them repeatedly not to leave the kitchen in a mess after they use

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



it. Then tell them—without exploding—that if it happens again, they will have to arrange for other accommodations when they visit.

It goes without saying that your wife should back you up on this. They should also ask their mother if there is anything else they can do to be helpful when they visit—like wash the towels they have used and make up the beds with fresh linens before they return to school.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in “What Every Teen Should Know.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



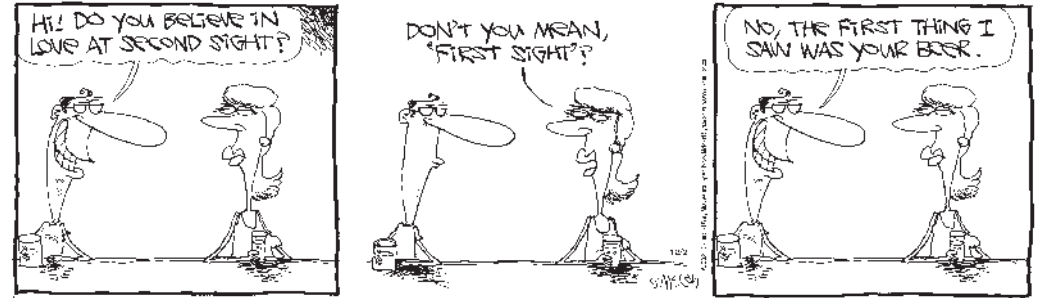
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Drain blockage

5 Zing

8 Transcript stats

12 Extended lunch?

13 Gardner of "Mogambo"

14 Move, in Realtor-speak

15 Sunrise direction

16 Snooze

17 Very small batteries

18 Goldberg on "The View"

20 PC programs

22 "Vanity Fair" protagonist

26 — d'art

29 Snitch

30 Prefix with natal

31 Praise

32 Insult

33 Dance move

DOWN

1 Enjoy

2 Wife of Jacob

3 Approximately

4 Retire

5 Freak out

6 Actress Mendes

7 Tropical fruits

8 Sales report

9 Field

10 — carte

11 "Mayday!"

19 Favorite

21 Calif. clock setting

23 Shrimp-like crustacean

24 Stink

25 Band in Boston?

26 Shoppe descriptor

27 Oz creator L. Frank —

28 Over the moon

32 Tinkers

33 Stitched up

35 Workout site

36 Potent stick

38 Queues

39 Loan shark's crime

42 Actress Blanchett

43 Beach crawler

44 Stable diet

45 Cote cry

46 A billion years

48 Lyricist Gershwin

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-2

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Aaron Rodgers, 38; Britney Spears, 40; Monica Seles, 48; Lucy Liu, 53.

Happy Birthday: Streamlining your life will make it easier for you to get where you want to go. Concentrate on your budget and what's important to you to ensure you can maintain the lifestyle that puts your mind at ease. Stop worrying about what others do and think; start pleasing yourself. Aim to attract people who share your ethics and goals. Your numbers are 5, 12, 21, 24, 33, 35, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Check your financial situation, and update investments, contracts and any other paperwork that is about to expire. Staying on top of your responsibilities will help ward off falling behind at a time that's crucial that you have everything in place. ★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Do your homework. If you jump into something prematurely, it will lead to regret. Take care of your physical needs to avoid weakness, injury or illness. Be on the lookout for someone jealous or eager to make you look bad. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Set your sights on what you want to happen, and press forward. Talks will bring you closer to your goal, and suggestions will enhance your chance to lead the way. Pace yourself, and don't promise more than you can deliver. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't be shy; express your thoughts and feelings, and you'll come up with an extraordinary plan that will make you look like a genius. Don't

risk your health and well-being because someone is not abiding by the rules. ★★★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Emotional anger will cause a stalemate with someone who can influence your lifestyle moving forward. Whether at home or work, do your best to get along with everyone. Think matters through and answer intelligently, and you will gain respect and support. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Put your heart and soul into what and who is important to you. Too much talk and not enough action will frustrate the ones you love. A physical show of affection, interest and leadership will encourage your desired results. Romance is encouraged. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Take matters into your own hands. Signify what you are doing, and delegate what you expect of others to reach your target. Opportunity depends on you and how you handle others as well as situations that surface. ★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You'll be stuck in a difficult situation if you let your emotions take over. Concentrate on what's essential, and take care of matters that will encourage the best outcome. Change is required. Causing a disruption will stifle your progress. ★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Pick up the pace and make every move you make count for something. Don't wait for others to catch up; set the standard and head to the finish line. Use brainpower to excel, and you will outmaneuver anyone trying to sideline you. ★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Pay attention, focus on detail, lock in what you want and don't stop until you reach your goal. Change begins with you. Make a move that will put an end to any uncertainty you harbor. Peace of mind is the ultimate destination. ★★★★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Choose your words wisely. An emotional argument will distance you from someone you love. Look for a positive way to express yourself, and it will help you get your way without a fight. A suggestion hidden in a compliment is favored. ★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Joint ventures aren't in your best interest. Overpaying for something, taking on too much debt or promising more than you can deliver will drag you down. Ask someone who has more experience, and you'll receive sound advice. Romance is encouraged. ★★★★★

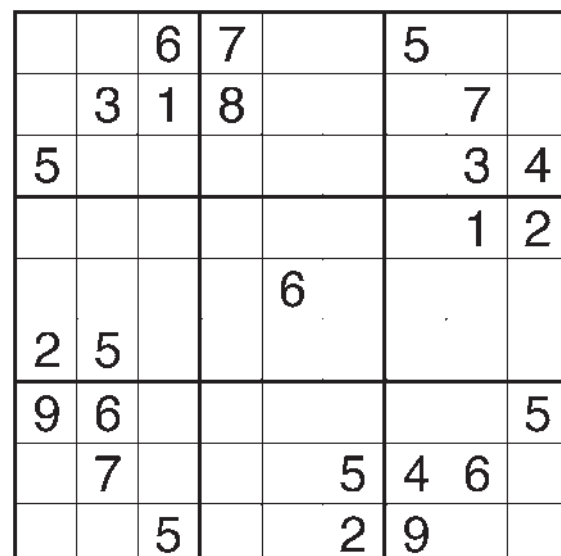
Birthday Baby: You are responsive, generous and determined. You are impulsive and expressive.

★: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★: Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



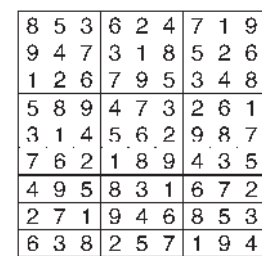
Difficulty Level ★★★

12/02

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SNAPDRAGONS

Solution: 6 letters

H O N U T R I E N T S H O R T
G E U S M E T S Y P U R P L E
G N R T L D S B E A P P L E R
A I I B D S T R L U W A T E R
R N I L A O O S L O F R W M Y
D D E B I C O L O R O O K D R
E O R M K A E R W P L M N S E
N O U E L A R O L F M A I E S
I R T N A L P T U A C O P T R
N S S E S O I L D S E R C I U
G T I D D T R A F R O S T H N
R A O T E G M U W O D N I W I
O N M A E I N T W I N N Y G
W D S P I L F N O R A N G E H
S P A S T E L A G N I R P S T

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12/2
Annual, Apple, Aroma, Bicolor, Bloom, Candy, Compost, Edging, Edible, Fall, Feed, Floral, Flower, Frost, Gardening, Grows, Herbaceous, Indoors, Lips, Madame, Moisture, Night, Nursery, Nutrients, Orange, Outdoor, Pastel, Pink, Plant, Purple, Reds, Rocket, Root, Short, Soil, Spring, Stand, Stems, Tall, Teas, Trailing, Twinn, Water, Whites, Window, Yellow
Yesterday's Answer: President
Treasures 26, 31 and 33 through 47 can be purchased online in time for the holidays at WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED?

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Suns win 17th straight by beating Warriors, 104-96



PHOENIX (AP)—Mikal Bridges and Deandre Ayton were all smiles at the postgame podium, reminiscing about a four-year turnaround for the Phoenix Suns that's in some ways still hard to believe.

The Suns won just 19 games during their rookie seasons. Now, they've tied a franchise record with 17 wins—in a row.

Ayton scored 24 points, Chris Paul added 15 points and 11 assists, and the Suns won their 17th straight by beating the Golden State Warriors 104-96 on Tuesday night in an early showdown between the NBA's top teams.

"It's just a lot of work, a lot of mental toughness, staying with it," Bridges said. "We knew when we first got here that we wanted to turn it around."

The Suns won despite losing star guard Devin Booker to a left hamstring injury in the second quarter. He had 10 points and two rebounds in 15 minutes. The 25-year-old appeared to get hurt when driving to the basket for a layup, grabbing at the back of his left leg before walking to the locker room a few minutes before halftime.

Suns coach Monty Williams said postgame that he didn't have an immediate update on Booker. The two-time All-Star came back to the bench for the second half, cheering on his teammates.

Even without Booker, the Suns led 56-54 at halftime and 80-78 going into the fourth quarter. The game stayed tight, and neither team led by double digits until Landry Shamet knocked down a 3-pointer — on an assist by Paul — with 54.4 seconds left.

"To me, this was just will and toughness," Williams said.

The win was another milestone for the Suns, who have thrived with the young core of Ayton, Bridges and Booker. The final key piece came when they added Paul—an 11-time All-Star—before last season. Phoenix made the NBA Finals in July before losing to the Milwaukee Bucks, and now they're on a winning streak that's lasted more than month.

The two teams play again Friday night at Golden State.

Tuesday's game was a highly anticipated showdown, as the Suns and Warriors have NBA's best records. It was also the first time in league history that two teams from the same division played each other with winning percentages of .850 or higher after at least 20 regular-season games, according to Elias Sports Bureau.

The game mostly lived up to the hype — at least until the Warriors, who had their seven-

game winning streak snapped, went cold in the fourth quarter.

Jordan Poole led Golden State with 28 points. Stephen Curry—who came into the game averaging 28.6 points per game—had 12 points on 4 of 21 shooting, including 3 of 14 from 3-point range.

"With all of the mistakes we did have and how terrible I shot the ball, it was a close game down the stretch," Curry said. "I know Booker got hurt, but yes, it was a good learning lesson for us. Understanding the intensity and the focus we need to beat a team like that."

The Suns limited the Warriors to just 42 points in the second half. The Warriors also had 22 turnovers.

The Suns and Warriors are now both 18-3. The only other time Phoenix has won 17 straight games was during the 2006-07 season. They'll go for their franchise record 18th win against the Pistons on Thursday.

The Suns haven't lost since Oct. 27 when Harrison Barnes hit a game-winning 3 at the buzzer for the Sacramento Kings.

Lakers 117, Kings 92

In Sacramento, Calif., Anthony Davis scored 25 points, Russell Westbrook added 23 and the Los Angeles Lakers overcame the absence of LeBron James to beat the Sacramento Kings 117-92 on Tuesday night.

The Lakers sent James home earlier in the day after he was placed in the NBA's health and safety protocol. Davis said James told him he felt good and was asymptomatic, but the Lakers will have to play at least a few games without him.

"We still have to find ways to win," Davis said. "We can't let that affect us. Obviously, he's a huge part of our team. But we've played a huge amount of games without him. So we kind of know how that is already. We've got to continue to play like we did on the defensive end until he's able to come back."

The Lakers got more than enough from their other two big stars and took over with a dominant third quarter to win back-to-back games for the first time since Nov. 8-10.

The Kings opened a 66-52 lead early in the third before the Lakers outscored them by 27 points over the final 9:15 of the quarter to take a 13-point lead heading into the fourth.

Grizzlies 98, Raptors 91

In Toronto, Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 25 points, Desmond Bane had 23 and Dillon Brooks 17 as the Memphis Grizzlies won back-to-back games, beating the struggling



Phoenix Suns guard Chris Paul (3) high fives head coach Monty Williams during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Golden State Warriors, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021, in Phoenix. **AP**

Toronto Raptors 98-91 Tuesday night.

After beating Sacramento Sunday, Memphis won again without leading scorer Ja Morant, who sat for the second game because of a sprained left knee. Morant is expected to miss at least two weeks.

"It's not about doing more, it's about playing better, even with Ja out of the lineup," Grizzlies coach Taylor Jenkins said.

Jackson, who shot 8 for 14, said the Grizzlies aren't trying to do too much without the influential Morant.

"You can't force it," Jackson said. "You've just got to be able to go out there and fill those gaps where he might have done something else."

Bane made five 3-pointers and Jackson had four for the Grizzlies, who never trailed and led by as many as 17 points.

"He really can do it all out there," Jackson said of Bane. "There's really no limit to what he can do."

Brooks, who is from suburban Toronto, played in Canada for the first time since Feb. 2018.

Nets 112, Knicks 110

In New York, Kevin Durant and James Harden took turns putting on a show in front of the largest crowd ever to see a Nets game in Brooklyn, one that was split between fans of New York's two teams.

In the end, the Nets were celebrating and the Knicks were fuming.

In its 10th season, the matchup between teams just a few miles apart looked like a real rivalry.

"Being here two years now, it doesn't matter who's on that team or who's on this team, I

think the energy's always going to be there," Harden said. "... Whether it's here or at MSG, the fans are going to be cheering for their respective teams and it's going to be a good game every time, and tonight we're just happy to come out with the win."

They got it after James Johnson made two free throws with 2.2 seconds left to give the Nets a 112-110 victory Tuesday night.

Harden had 34 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists, and Durant heated up after a slow start to finish with 27 points and nine assists. He had 11 points in the final 5:45, but the Knicks sent a second defender to force him to give the ball up on the last possession—as Durant suspected might happen.

"But it's risky to do that in the fourth, I mean the last shot

of the game," he said. "And yeah, I was prepared for it coming out of the timeout."

The ball went to Johnson, who was fouled in the lane and made the free throws for the final points of an entertaining, nationally televised undercard to the Warriors-Suns main event.

Trail Blazers 110, Pistons 92

In Portland, Ore., CJ McCollum scored 28 points and the Portland Trail Blazers handed the Detroit Pistons their seventh straight loss with a 110-92 victory on Tuesday night.

Ben McLemore, who had played in just six previous games for the Blazers this season, had 17 points off the bench. Portland, with Damian Lillard looking on from the bench in street clothes, snapped a three-game losing streak.

Portland has won 10 straight at home for the first time since 2009.

Detroit rookie Cade Cunningham finished with a season-high 26 points, including five 3-pointers. The Pistons have won just four games this season.

Both teams were playing the second of back-to-backs. The Blazers fell 129-107 at the Utah Jazz on Monday night, while the Pistons were coming off a 110-106 loss at the Los Angeles Lakers.

The Blazers were without three key players. Lillard missed the game to manage the abdominal tendinopathy that has bothered him this season, fellow starter Norman Powell has right quad contusion and Nassir Little has a left ankle sprain.

Anfernee Simons started for Lillard, while Tony Snell took Powell's place in the lineup. Simons finished with 12 points and six rebounds.

LeBron James in NBA's virus protocols, ruled out Tuesday

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

LeBron James has been placed in the NBA's health and safety protocols, and was ruled out for the Los Angeles Lakers' game against the Sacramento Kings on Tuesday night.

Such a move almost certainly means one of two things: that James, who said earlier this season that he is vaccinated, either tested positive for COVID-19 or had an inconclusive result.

A person with knowledge of the situation said the Lakers are preparing for James to miss multiple games. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press because neither the team nor James had revealed

that detail publicly. ESPN previously reported that James is "expected" to miss several games.

If James tested positive, he would likely be looking at a minimum of 10 days away from the Lakers unless he returns two negative PCR tests in a 24-hour span. The Lakers learned of James' situation Tuesday morning, coach Frank Vogel said, and arranged for transportation to take him back to Los Angeles from Sacramento.

Vogel would not say if James was exhibiting any symptoms.

"Obviously it's a huge loss," Vogel said before Tuesday's game. "It's disappointing. We just want the best for him now. That's where our thoughts are."

The news that James is missing time came on the same day the NBA underscored its previous recommendation, echoed by the National Basketball Players Association, that coaches and players who are vaccinated receive a booster shot as soon as possible.

The NBA, in a memo obtained by The AP, also told its teams Tuesday that it has documented 34 cases in which a fully vaccinated player, coach or staffer had a breakthrough case of COVID-19. The league has said about 97% of players are fully vaccinated, with Brooklyn's Kyrie Irving—who has not played this season because of his status—among the exceptions.

Other NBA stars have al-

ready missed multiple games this season after testing positive, including Philadelphia's Joel Embiid—who just missed three weeks while dealing with the virus.

Tuesday's game marks James' 12th absence in the Lakers' first 23 games this season. He missed 10 games because of injuries and another because of the first NBA suspension of his 19-year career.

With James, the Lakers have gone 7-4. Without him, they were 4-7 entering Tuesday.

"We're different now than we were three weeks ago or when that first time he went out was," Vogel said. "Hopefully we'll have more success this time around."

Báez to Detroit, MLB teams race to finish biz before lockout



NEW YORK
(AP)—Javier Báez agreed

to bring his high motor to the Motor City, while other teams around the majors raced to finish up business before Tuesday's deadline to tender contracts and a likely roster freeze coming when baseball's collective bargaining agreement expires Wednesday.

AL Cy Young Award winner Robbie Ray finalized a five-year deal with Seattle, and clubs agreed to more than 30 one-year contracts with players—many to avoid salary arbitration.

Meanwhile, 41 players were not tendered contracts and became free agents, including fan-favorite Brewers slugger Dan Vogelbach and Mets pitcher Robert Gsellman. The deadline for teams to offer contracts to players with less than six years of major league service was 8 p.m. Tuesday.

The biggest deal of the day went to Báez, a free agent infielder who agreed to a \$140 million, six-year contract with Detroit, giving the Tigers a dynamic bat for the middle of their order.

Ray got \$115 million from the Mariners after going 13-7 with a 2.84 ERA and a major league-high 248 strikeouts in 193 1/3 innings for Toronto last season.

The Chicago White Sox fortified their bullpen by signing right-hander Kendall Graveman to a \$24 million, three-year deal, and Miami completed a \$56 million, five-year contract to keep right-hander Sandy Alcantara in the rotation for years to come. The Marlins also acquired All-Star infielder Joey Wendle from the Tampa Bay Rays for a minor league outfielder.

The flurry pushed spending in recent days to more than \$1.6 billion before what likely will be Major League Baseball's first work stoppage since 1995. The five-year collective bargaining agreement expires at 11:59 p.m. EST



New York Mets' Javier Baez celebrates his home run in the dugout during the third inning of a baseball game against the Washington Nationals, Sunday, Sept. 5, 2021, in Washington.

Wednesday, and owners are expected to lock out the players if the sides can't reach a new labor deal in time.

"The last few weeks have been as active of a November as we've ever experienced," Rays president of baseball operations Erik Neander said. "It's been a lot of fun. My personal opinion is that we don't need three, four months of winter to drag it out to figure out what we need to do."

"The CBA that is expiring, that uncertainty is something that I think is fair to say contributed to a lot of the activity we've seen across the game the last few weeks. I think actually it's been great for the game to see that much activity in the early going here."

Báez, who turns 29 on Wednesday, hit .265 with 31 homers and 87 RBIs in 138 games with the Cubs and Mets this season. The move to Detroit likely puts him back at shortstop after he finished the year at second base while playing alongside good friend Francisco Lindor in New York.

The contract is pending a physical, according to a person with direct knowledge of the situation who spoke Tuesday to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the deal had not been finalized.

The Mets completed a \$78 million, four-year contract with center fielder Starling Marte and a \$26.5 million, two-year deal with outfielder Mark Canha that includes a club option for 2024.

The Giants agreed with right-hander Alex Cobb on a \$20 million, two-year contract with a \$10 million club option for 2024 that includes a \$2 million buyout.

Houston signed reliever Héctor Neris to a \$17 million, two-year deal with an option for 2024, and reliever Daniel Hudson joined the Los Angeles Dodgers on a one-year contract.

The Pittsburgh Pirates agreed with free agent catcher Roberto Pérez on a \$5 million, one-year deal, replacing Gold Glove catcher Jacob Stallings

a day after trading him to Miami. The Cubs also added a backstop, agreeing with Yan Gomes on a \$13 million, two-year deal. Both contracts were confirmed by people to the AP on condition of anonymity because they had not been announced.

The Los Angeles Angels agreed on a \$6.75 million, one-year deal with right-hander Michael Lorenzen, who also played outfield for Cincinnati in recent seasons. He could give LA a second two-way player alongside Shohei Ohtani.

Tampa Bay signed lefty reliever Brooks Raley to a \$10 million, two-year deal with a club option for 2024.

Washington agreed with free agent infielder César Hernández on a \$4 million, one-year deal.

More than 30 players agreed to contracts in the hours before the deadline for teams to offer deals to unsigned players on their 40-man rosters.

Atlanta shortstop Orlando Arcia was the only player to get a multiyear deal, a \$3 mil-

lion, two-year contract. He gets \$1.6 million next season and \$1.3 million in 2023, and the Braves have a \$2 million option for 2024 with a \$100,000 buyout.

Braves outfielder Guillermo Heredia agreed to a \$1 million, one-year deal.

Veteran infielder Gio Urshela agreed to a \$6.55 million, one-year contract with the New York Yankees, while starting pitcher Domingo Germán agreed to \$1.75 million and pitcher Lucas Luetge to \$905,000. New York also released infielder Chris Gittens, who plans to sign with a team in Japan.

Colorado reliever Daniel Bard agreed at \$4.4 million after saving a career-best 20 games for the Rockies, and Colorado right-hander Tyler Kinley got \$1,025,000.

Tampa Bay first baseman Ji-Man Choi agreed to \$3.2 million.

Baltimore agreed with outfielder Anthony Santander (\$3.15 million), right-hander Jorge López (\$1.5 million)

and left-hander Paul Fry (\$850,000).

The Orioles also signed second baseman Rougned Odor to a one-year deal. Odor, who spent last season with the Yankees, has a \$12 million salary for 2022, and the Texas Rangers are responsible for all but next year's minimum. Texas is also responsible for a \$3 million buyout of his 2023 option. Odor played seven seasons with the Rangers before joining the Yankees.

The current minimum salary is \$570,500, but that could change in the next collective bargaining agreement.

Oakland reached deals with outfielder/infielder Chad Pinder (\$2,725,000), outfielder/second baseman Tony Kemp (\$2,225,000) and right-hander Deolis Guerra (\$815,000).

Milwaukee struck agreements with right-hander Tyler Duffey (\$3.8 million), infielder/outfielder Jace Pederson (\$1,825,000), first baseman Rowdy Tellez (\$1.94 million), left-hander Caleb Thielbar (\$1.3 million) and right-hander Jandel Gustave (\$675,000 in majors, higher of \$225,000 or \$100,000 over minimum in minors).

San Diego struck deals with right-hander Emilio Pagan (\$2.3 million), left-hander Tim Hill (\$1,325,000) and right-hander Austin Adams (\$925,000).

San Francisco agreed with outfielder/first baseman Austin Slater (\$1.85 million), left-hander Jarlin García (\$1,725,000) and right-hander John Brebbia (\$837,500), and Arizona with left-hander Caleb Smith (\$2 million) and right-hander Noé Ramirez (\$1.25 million).

Also reaching deals were Boston right-hander Ryan Brasier (\$1.4 million), Philadelphia right-hander Seranthony Dominguez (\$727,500), Pittsburgh infielder Kevin Newman (\$1.95 million), Seattle right-hander Casey Sadler (\$1,025,000 plus a \$125,000 assignment bonus if traded) and Washington outfielder Andrew Stevenson (\$850,000).



Toronto Blue Jays pitcher Robbie Ray throws against the Minnesota Twins in the first inning of a baseball game, Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021, in Minneapolis.

Mariners sign Cy Young winner Robbie Ray to \$115M, 5-year deal

SEATTLE (AP)—AL Cy Young Award winner Robbie Ray and the Seattle Mariners finalized their \$115 million, five-year contract Tuesday night.

Ray is coming off the best season of his career with the Toronto Blue Jays, going 13-7 with a 2.84 ERA and 248 strikeouts in 193 1/3 innings. A left-handed power pitcher, he topped the majors in strikeouts and led the American League in ERA, games started and innings pitched.

He immediately becomes the ace of Seattle's staff. Marco Gonzales, Chris Flexen and

Logan Gilbert are also under contract for 2022 with an ascending Mariners team that went 90-72 last season and barely missed snapping the club's 20-year playoff drought.

"Adding our league's reigning Cy Young Award winner is exciting," Mariners president of baseball operations Jerry Dipoto said in a statement. "He's a high-character person, as well as one of the preeminent strikeout pitchers in the game. Robbie brings real presence to the front of our rotation."

Ray wasn't even an All-Star

in his first full season with the Blue Jays, which speaks to how dominant he was the second half of the year. Beginning with his start on July 11 against Tampa Bay, when he threw seven shutout innings, Ray had a 2.35 ERA and 129 strikeouts in 99 2/3 innings over his final 16 starts. He pitched at least six innings in 12 of the 16 and allowed more than three earned runs only twice.

Ray was the clear choice for the Cy Young Award, earning 29 of 30 first-place votes to easily outpace New York Yankees ace Gerrit Cole.

"I can't wait to get started here in Seattle. I'm here to win," Ray said. "There's something special going on here with the team coming off a 90-win season and I'm excited to be a part of it."

The signing of Ray was the second major move of the offseason for Seattle along with trading for All-Star second baseman Adam Frazier from San Diego.

Ray turned down an \$18.4 million qualifying offer from Toronto, so the Mariners will forfeit a draft pick as compensation for signing him.

Tinian caging championship, battle for 3rd postponed

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Tinian Amateur Basketball Association has cancelled tomorrow's much-anticipated championship game and battle for third of the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.

TABA president Christopher SN King said the recent positive cases on Tinian has forced their hand to postpone the finals between Team Kio and Rampage and the third place game between Team CNMI and Devil Dog Warriors to a still undetermined later date.

"As per TASA's recommendation, we shall suspend all sports activities until further notice. So, the championship game will be cancelled until further notice," he said.

NMSA

From Page 20

cronesian Games set in Majuro to 2023 due to the pandemic.

Tan said the Micronesian Games' postponement weighed on him a lot because sports like basketball, which is not part of the Pacific Mini Games next year, have been training since mid-year with the expectation of finally displaying their wares in Majuro.

"They did not have competition last year and nothing this year and if no Micronesian Games also next year. Three years without any regional games is not good. The [Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Association] called for a tryout a couple of months ago and they've been training and it turns out they were training for nothing because of the postponement and that bothers me. So what are they training for?" he said.

Under the Marianas Cup concept, CNMI teams will challenge Guam teams every year.

"We want to see if we can go for the Marianas Cup so all sports will be preparing to challenge their counterparts from Guam and this will be annually. One year, the CNMI will host and the next year, Guam," said Tan.

So far, the NMSA president has floated four options on how the Marianas Cup would proceed. The first option would be Guam hosting as much as 18 sports. The second option is the CNMI will take the hosting duties. The third is the CNMI and Guam will split the sports with half taking place in the latter and the other half in the former. The fourth, which Tan concedes is the most doable, is individual sports will arrange their respective Marianas Cup events

TASA stands for Tinian Amateur Sports Association and TABA is under its umbrella.

After more than a month of postponement, TABA finally got on with the playoffs of the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League last Monday, but it proved to be short but sweet due to the pandemic reaching Tinian's shores.

The first game of the Tinian caging semifinals saw undefeated Team Kio punch the first finals ticket with a 97-82 victory over Team CNMI. They will be joined in the championship by Rampage a few hours later after they defeated Devil Dog Warriors, 65-58, in the second game.

Team Kio's Robert Reyes led all scorers with 29 points in the demolition of Team CNMI, while Dustin Sablan added 26 markers of his own. Dennis Borja and Louise Malignon paced Team CNMI in

against their counterpart sports federations in Guam.

"I was thinking, if it was too much burden on the [Guam National Olympic Committee or NMSA] maybe Somia (NMIVA president Somia Quan) can just contact her counterpart in Guam and coordinate with the Guam volleyball association and do your own Marianas Cup and you could decide to either do it here or do it in Guam and the other sports can do that," he said.

Tan, however, assured that NMSA, as the umbrella sports body in the CNMI, will fully back the local sports federations if they do decide to push through with their own Marianas Cup events against Guam.

"NMSA will come in and throw the biggest support it can. One of them is the airfare to Guam and the hotel accommodations. You know what, we were prepared to send our athletes to Majuro so I said that to Guam, too 'money shouldn't be a problem because you were prepared to send athletes to Majuro' where it's a lot more costly."

Whatever the sports federations decide, the NMSA head hopes they just make it as soon as possible.

"I hope this decision will be made sooner than later because I don't want the athletes to hear the bad news that there's a postponement of 12 months and stop training. Any of the options is OK for NMSA as long as we have competition... Good thing to have the Marianas Cup so everyone doesn't have to wait for Micronesian Games to come around. One thing I learned is athletes always feel that after they return from a regional event they don't have to train right away because there's nothing going in for another four years."



Team Kio defeated Team CNMI, 97-82, in the first semifinals game of the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League last Monday at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CUKI

From Page 20

"Next season is gonna be real a tough challenge because all the riders have improved tremendously this past year alone! In the beginning of the 2021 season, it wasn't as hard to win races just because I have been racing bikes the past 45 years! So I have experience on my side. But midway through the season all my competitors picked up the speed and started beat-

ing me!" he said

Cuki went on to say that his biggest challenges will come from his two sons, Ellery Cruz, Angelito Hernaez, Dave Celis, Champi Villacanes, and Patrick Togawa.

"All have potential to win races!" he added.

Since it's Thanksgiving, the owner of Trench Tech Gym also took time to thank his family and supporters.

"First of all, I am thankful to wife who is my biggest supporter! Our whole family

races so we bond all the time and it makes the racing much more fun and worthwhile. Of course, the MRA board who works tirelessly on bringing motocross action to our island and maintaining the track with the help of the Department of Public Works and the Saipan Mayor's Office and of course numerous volunteers. Last but not least are the general members and racers! Without them, we are nothing," said Cuki, who recently celebrated his birthday.



Charles Cepeda, right, and Champi Villacanes in action in last Sunday's Marianas Racing Association's Turkey Cross Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track in Marpi. LAO ZHANG

GUERRERO

From Page 20

Torres and Hannah Choi and Jordan Panglinan and Malou Malasarte. The No. 2 seed Pangilinan and Malasarte downed Danie Macario and Miles Guerrero in two games, 21-10, 21-18 to reach the semifinals of the bottom half of the draw. The tandem of Torres and Choi, on the other hand, needed three games to eliminate Ezekiel Macario and Jen Savellano, 20-21, 21-10, 21-18, and set up a semis showdown against Malasarte and Pangilinan.

In an earlier game, Ezekiel Macario and Savellano topped Nicomedez Antonio and Lucelle Lampera, 21-4, 21-4, to earn the right to face the pair of Choi and Torres.

Meanwhile, it will be Janelle Pangilinan versus Choi in the women's singles finals. Pangilinan dominated Lampera, 21-12, 21-4 to make it to the title game, while Choi followed suit after a victory via walkover against Serrano.

Pangilinan is also in the finals of the women's doubles event after she and Savellano recorded a 21-7, 21-11 triumph over Miles Guerrero and Mala-

sarte. The duo of Savellano and Pangilinan will go for the division crown this weekend against the pair of Choi and Serrano, who reaches the finals after ousting Cardino and Lampera, 21-6, 21-15.

The rest of the games in the open men's and women's singles, doubles, and mixed will be played this weekend, along with the matches in the U19 divisions. This is the first NMI Badminton National Championships that the Northern Marianas Badminton Association is hosting and it's made possible by the support of Badminton Oceania.

the loss with 22 and 20 markers, respectively.

Wesley Walker was the high-point man for Rampage with 25 points and he was ably supported by the 13 points of Leo Pascua. Devil Dog Warriors' losing cause was led by the 23 points of Jake Montgomery with Damon Kada and Zjonti Kubinski adding 14 and 11 points, respectively.

The rest of the teams making up the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League for 2021 are Power Builders, Ko Bees, RNV Construction, and SMA Flyers.

Alverick completed the Top 3 in the Expert Class with 40 points, followed by Cruz (36 points), Charles Cepeda (30 points), Togawa (30 points), and Villacanes (16 points).

In the Mini II Class, Vicente Palacios had a perfect ride by topping both heats for 50 points. He was followed by Ethan Yumul and T.J. Ferrer with 44 points and 38 points, respectively. Devin Yumul (38 points), Mari Alvarez (32 points), Leighton Palacios (29 points), Calix Cruz (29 points), Matthew Guerrero (25 points), Hunter Derocher (25 points), and Marissa Rasa (11 points) also saw action in the Mini II Class.

Henry Camacho Sr. was the man in the Big Boy ATV after edging Christian "Hollywood" Camacho in the division. Both riders totaled 45 points, but the former edged the latter in the second heat to claim the championship. Rex Susulin completed the Top 3 with 44 points.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	15	6	.714	—
New York	11	10	.524	4
Boston	11	10	.524	4
Philadelphia	11	10	.524	4
Toronto	9	13	.409	6½

Southeast Division

Miami	13	8	.619	—
Washington	13	8	.619	—
Charlotte	13	10	.565	1
Atlanta	11	10	.524	2
Orlando	4	18	.182	9½

Central Division

Chicago	14	8	.636	—
Milwaukee	13	8	.619	½
Cleveland	11	10	.524	2½
Indiana	9	14	.391	5½
Detroit	4	17	.190	9½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	10	9	.526	—
Memphis	11	10	.524	—
San Antonio	6	13	.316	4
New Orleans	6	17	.261	6
Houston	4	16	.200	6½

Northwest Division

Utah	14	7	.667	—
Minnesota	11	10	.524	3
Denver	10	10	.500	3½
Portland	11	11	.500	3½
Oklahoma City	6	14	.300	7½

Pacific Division

Phoenix	18	3	.857	—
Golden State	18	3	.857	—
L.A. Clippers	11	10	.524	7
L.A. Lakers	12	11	.522	7
Sacramento	8	14	.364	10½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Suns win 17th straight by beating Warriors, 104-96 **PAGE 17**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE



Cuki Alvarez leads a pack of riders in the Expert Class of Marianas Racing Association's Turkey Cross Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track in Marpi.

LAO ZHANG

Cuki cooks competition in Expert Class

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

T rue to his “The Janitor” moniker in the mixed martial arts fight scene, Cuki Alvarez cleaned up the competition in the Expert Class of Marianas Racing Association's Turkey Cross Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track in Marpi.

The 50-year-old boat captain actually edged his son, Shane, in the second heat to claim the championship of MRA's one-off Thanksgiving race. Both finished with 47 points with Shane taking the first race, 25-22, before Cuki won the second race, 25-22. “I ended up winning the tie-break because I won the second heat and that counts in the



end. So I got the top podium. It was awesome!” said the elder Alvarez.

He added that he's just clinging as long as he can to the Expert Class pole position, as eventually his sons—Shane and Alverick—and other up-and-coming riders will eventually topple him from his lofty perch.

See CUKI on Page 19

Guerrero, Pangilinan take first finals seat

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The top-ranked pair of Nate Guerrero and Janelle Pangilinan are living up to high expectations after sweeping its first two games in the open mixed doubles event in the NMI Badminton National Championships 2021 last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex.

Pangilinan and Guerrero first eased past Sefric Veloria and Jen Cardinio, 21-10, 21-6, and then outclassed Chris Hilario and Michaela Serrano, 21-12, 21-19, to move ahead in the finals of the nine-team field.

The finalists will have to wait for their foes in the title match, as the second and last finals ticket will still be contested by the pairs of Joseph

See GUERRERO on Page 19



Janelle Pangilinan, left, and Nate Guerrero, right, are in the finals of the open mixed doubles event in the NMI Badminton National Championships 2021 after sweeping their foes last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan wants an annual competition between the CNMI and Guam encompassing all sports federations under the NMSA umbrella.

MARK RABAGO

NMSA wants Marianas Cup for all sports

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



The Northern Marianas Sports Association wants a CNMI-Guam competition patterned after the Marianas Cup for all sports so that athletes can train year round.

NMSA president Jerry Tan, speaking during a recent NMSA membership meeting, said the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association has been holding the Marianas Cup for years. The competition pits the national teams (senior and junior) of the CNMI against their counterparts from Guam. The Common-

wealth gets to host it one year with Guam hosting it the next.

He added that other sports federations like the Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association have had similar setups with Guam with the latter's clubs challenging local teams many years back.

The impetus of a Marianas Cup across all sports, Tan said, was mulled even before the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled and then slowed down sports activities on both islands.

It gained more traction lately after the Marshall Islands announced that it will be putting off the 2022 Mi-

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